

Brian Shaw: Taking Charge

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Larry Bird

20,000 Points And Counting

Volume 6, Issue 2 December 21, 1990 \$3.00





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CELTICS PRIDE

Volume 6 Issue 2
Number 102
December 21, 1990



Cover.....

720,000 Points And Counting

History was made with 8:19 to play in the third period of the Celtics-Bullets game at the Garden on Friday, November 30. Bird took the ball on the right wing, drove left, fittingly around a pick by Robert Parish, stopped and popped at the foul line letting a patented 15-footer fly. Larry Bird joined the elite 20,000 point, 5,000 assist club. Cover photography by Steve Lipofsky.

Features.....

11Reggie Shines In Many Diverse Ways

In the midst of the Thanksgiving holiday, Reggie Lewis decided to purchase three hundred turkeys to give to the disadvantaged of Boston. Despite becoming one of the best swing players in basketball, Lewis tries to give back all he can to help others.

17A Look At The Backcourt

These days the Celtics world is abuzz with talk and speculation about Reggie Lewis, Brian Shaw, Kevin Gamble, and Dee Brown. These four bring with them long sought after qualities such as speed, athleticism, and burgeoning abilities.

Departments.....

- 4 — Coaches Corner
- 5 — Color It Green
- 6 — Halfcourt Press
- 9 — Man To Man
- 12 — Red on Roundball
- 14 — Perspective
- 15 — Interview
- 16 — NBA Notebook
- 18 — Game By Game
- 20 — Double Dribbles
- 22 — Celtics Confidential
- 26 — The Fan's Eyeball

All photography in this magazine is shot on Kodak film.

Sound Off.....

Excitement Runs Wild

Dear Sound Off,

I'm really excited about this year's team. There is a sense of enthusiasm being generated that I haven't seen in a couple of years. The Celtics have a spark that I hope will last all season. The young legs of Shaw, Lewis, Brown, and Gamble seem to be affecting the legs of Bird, Parish, and McHale. The "old" men seem to feel young again. Keep the chemistry flowing Coach Ford, it is really, fun to see us winning and having again.

Paul Preston
Orlando, FL

Celtics Pride is also excited about the Celtics' winning ways. Coach Ford's up-tempo style seems to be working, and the players are adapting to it, more and more everyday. Celtics Pride is confident that the Celtics are headed for a fine season, so, stay tuned!

Everybody Loves An Underdog

Dear Sound Off,

Everybody loves an underdog, and what better underdog to root for, than Kevin Gamble. I could never understand why Coach Rodgers let Gamble rot away on the bench. I'm glad that Kevin was the type of player who persevered through the year's past. It's great to see Gamble playing so well, and thank you for your story (cover story, Volume 6, Issue 1). We are rooting for you Kevin!

Dan Meele
Reading, PA

Celtics Pride feels that Kevin Gamble has benefited from the added playing time and the confidence that Coach Ford has shown in him. It's great to see Gamble playing so well, and as his confidence rises, so, we hope, will his already outstanding playing.

Don't Worry

Dear Sound Off,

I don't think Celtic's fans have to worry about losing in the first round of the play-offs this year. This team is ready to challenge for the NBA Championship. I know it may be premature to feel like this but I'm really excited about the Celtics. They are playing better than I ever thought they would. Right now, I feel they are as good as any team in the league!

Cecil Hower
Trenton, NJ

Celtics Pride and the Celtics hope you're right about your prognostication. Celtics Pride would like nothing better than to see this team go to the Championship game.

Let's Not Fake It

Dear Sound Off,

Just a few comments on that Atlanta game that was cancelled because of wet spots on the court.

I don't believe the Celtics got a fair deal. Boston was given a certain amount of time to try and get the court dry. The official then tells both coaches that play would resume, but if any player is seen slipping, the game would be cancelled. Come on guys! Be real! That's like giving Atlanta the option to play or not! Atlanta had lost eight straight, they're playing

on the road against a hot team, their star player has a bad ankle, and they're down by seventeen points. Anyone could easily predict what was going to happen the moment they started playing again. Half of Atlanta's team started falling down! The Celtics had five players on that end of the court too! I didn't see any of them slipping or falling down after the court was worked on! To be fair to the Boston fans and team, the officials should have given the Hawks the other goal and stated that if any official or Boston player is seen slipping because of the wet court, then the game would be cancelled.

At least the NBA did the right thing by allowing the game to be picked up where it left off.

Roger C. Gaskill
Chas., SC

Celtics Pride has to disagree with you on this one. Your evidence against Atlanta is correct, but, we at Celtics Pride do not feel that the Atlanta players were falling on purpose. The court was hazardous for both teams, and the officials made the right choice. Would you feel the same way about Atlanta if one of the Celtics fell down and was injured?

Supporting A Letter

Dear Sound Off,

In reading the article in the current "Celtics Pride" entitled "Which Green is Most Important?", I feel a great urgency to back up Christy Sanford. She states perfectly in her letter the thoughts that are going through my mind as well as MANY other Celtic fans that I know.

As far as Brian Shaw goes, I feel he has proven that he can play in the NBA, it's just a question of WHICH TEAM? If we continue to let Brian get away with the humiliation he has put the ENTIRE Celtic organization through, then "Celtics Pride" and the legendary mystique that people like Red Auerbach, Bob Cousy, Bill Russell, Larry Bird, and countless others have WORKED HARD to achieve is in SERIOUS trouble!

Reggie Lewis I feel a little more lenient about, since he did not make such a big deal about the contract. He can help the Celtics very much and be another Kevin McHale or Robert Parish, given enough time. I must agree with Christy Sanford again, though, when she states that he will NOT be another Larry Bird.

I also feel that her statement about trading Larry Bird is a little harsh, but I must agree with the message she is trying to give. As far as basketball being "not just a game anymore," that's true. However, if we continue on the path that we are on, Celtics pride and mystique won't be around "anymore" either! I don't see how you can "give them a chance," especially Shaw. Lets get back to the old Celtics ways. Get the mystique and pride back to where it was before; by having opponents FEAR the Boston Garden and have them KNOW they'll lose before they walk through the door!

R. Mosher
Bath, ME

Celtics Pride must disagree with your feelings on Brian Shaw. If the Celtics didn't give Brian a chance, then he wouldn't be playing as well as he is right now. And, the Celtics would probably not be doing as well. Celtics Pride feels that the emergence of Brian Shaw is a big reason why the Celtics are in first place. Have faith, Shaw is becoming a player that will return the Celtic's mystique back to Boston Garden.

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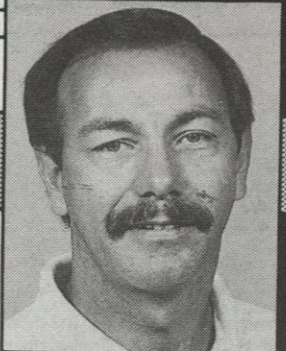
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December 21, 1990



By Chris Ford

Coaches Corner

We Are Controlling What We Do

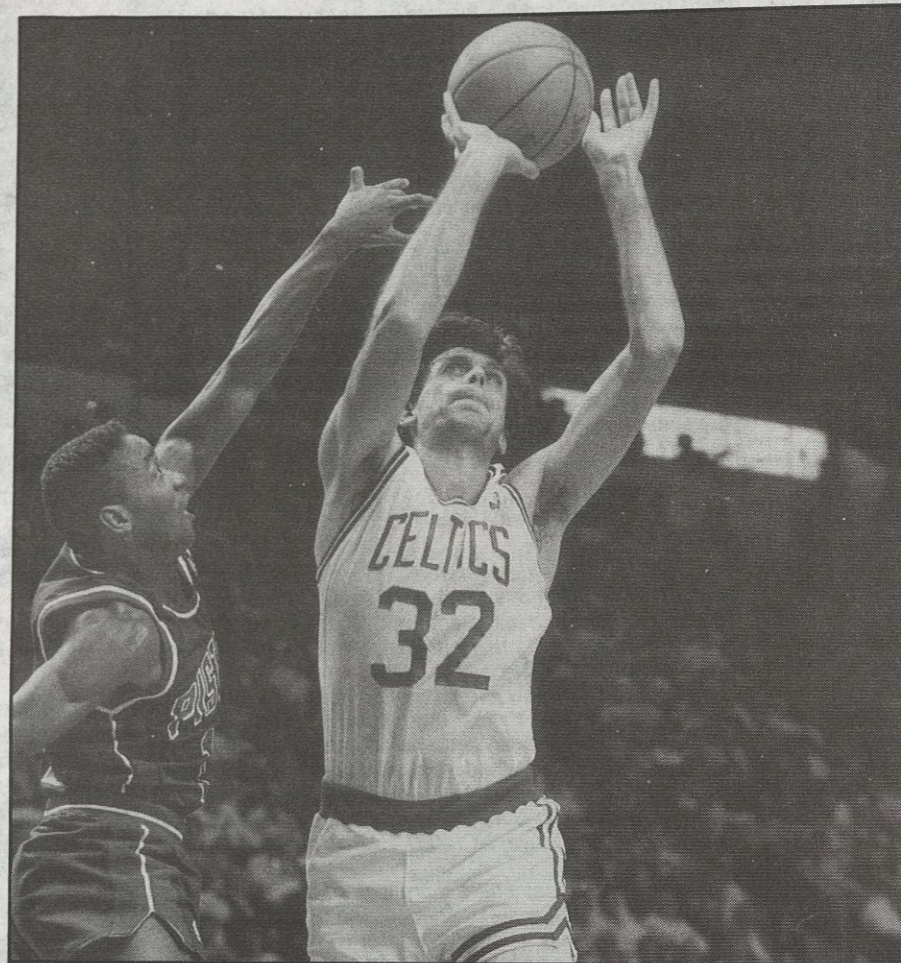
It was late in the first quarter of our abbreviated game against the Atlanta Hawks on that uncommonly warm late November night at the Boston Garden. Rumeal Robinson of the Hawks had slipped and then, so had Duane Ferrell. It was getting to be risky business... and my mind momentarily returned to my rookie year, before the season opener in downtown Detroit when I was with the Detroit Pistons. Like last week in Boston, officials were forced to cancel the game, because Cobo Hall, where we played our home games, had been resurfaced and the varnish they had used had been so slippery we literally couldn't move.

The NBA was wise to cancel that game, as they were to postpone the game we were involved in against the Hawks. Though we had a 37-20 lead and were in the midst of our best ball of the year, I couldn't argue with the decision by Dick Bavetta, the referee. Players were slipping, and were afraid to make basic cuts. When a tentativeness like that is introduced into the game, you know there's a major problem.

Nonetheless, while waiting to hear about a makeup date and more importantly, whether we would be ahead by that 37-20 score when the game was rescheduled, we resumed practicing and preparing for a big month in December. (Incidentally, I do not think that the Hawks protest, claiming the cause of their deficit in the game was the condition of the floor, is legitimate. We were controlling the game, based on basketball. I concurred with Reggie Lewis' observations: We were playing defense against them on their end of the floor where the floor was treacherous, and we weren't falling.)

Within the first three weeks of December, we played Philadelphia twice, the Milwaukee Bucks, who handled us easily in Milwaukee the first time we played, and the champions, the Detroit Pistons. Last week I was asked about preparations for these teams and it was something I hadn't given much thought.

It's more than retreating into a cliché, namely, that we play one game at a time. No, but what we are doing is concentrating on our own game. We are making sure, as much as we can, that other teams are not



Kevin McHale is playing the best basketball he has in years.

controlling what we do.

We have run more and a major reason for our success running is that we are playing such good defense. And we've won in the beginning of the season because from the very beginning of the game, we've come out ready to play. By pressuring the opposition, and showing them we're willing to do a good job on the defensive end, we've taken teams out of what they've wanted to do.

We jumped ahead of Atlanta, Miami, Cleveland and Washington. Even when we've trailed in some games against Houston, Utah, New Jersey and New York (all games in November), we never fell out of it because of the commitment to defense.

I think we need to get better. In all areas, because the talent level throughout the league is so good — and essentially equal

son.

We will, however, get a better idea after this month.

We go up against two division winners, and in the case of Detroit, the NBA champions the past two seasons. When you compete against a Charles Barkley, one of the superstars in this league, you have to be willing to make the commitment defensively, not only on an individual basis, where Reggie Lewis, perhaps, will get the assignment, but also on a team level. Reggie has been very good at steering guys as talented as Dominique Wilkins and a Barkley to the help. It's a cause of our success as a team on the defensive end. Both Robert Parish and Kevin McHale have blocked shots consistently this year. Larry Bird has played extremely well on the defensive boards.

Naturally, a measuring instrument of our progress will be the Pistons. Their success is extremely dependent on their guards. Isiah Thomas, Joe Dumars and Vinnie Johnson have keyed their success the past three seasons.

Thomas has probably always been a superstar because of his talent, his heart, and his intensity. He proved his abilities in clutch situations in The Finals in the past three years. Dumars has always been recognized by insiders in the league as a superstar-caliber player. A superb individual player on offense, he nevertheless fits his skills within the team concept. Except when the time is needed for him to go one-on-one. Then, he's there for them.

Vinnie Johnson, meanwhile, not only won the championship last season with a buzzer-beater, he has done this type of damage to the Celtics since the 1985 playoffs, when he went for 18 in a quarter and nearly dethroned us, before the Pistons' time.

These players are out front for Detroit — offensively and defensively. Dennis Rodman is a key player here, too. But it's the intensity and the talent of the Pistons' guards which needs to be stopped.

But you do that by continuing to do what's working. We have a good eight man rotation right now, one that we're staying with in this phase of the year. We're finally getting big-time play again from Robert, and in many ways, Kevin McHale and Larry Bird are playing the best basketball they have in years, both thriving in the open court.

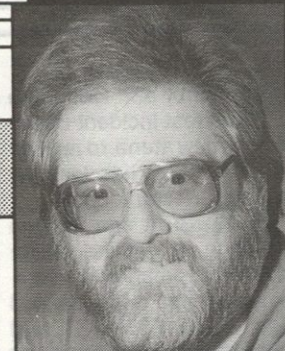
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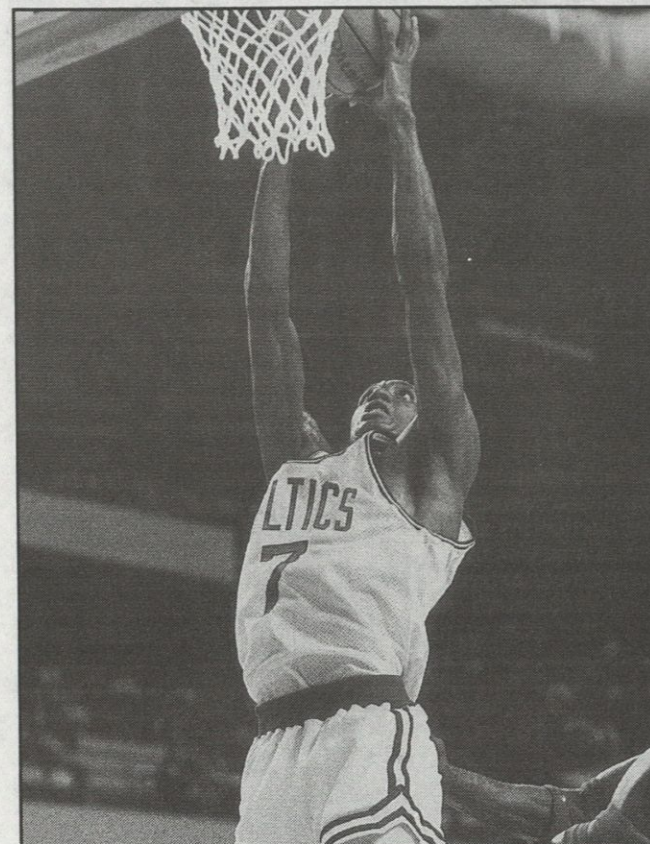
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By Jim Bianchine

Color It Green

The Celtics Athleticism Is Exciting To Watch



Dee Brown is slowly shaking loose from the rookie label.

When it came time to count the votes when Boston Celtics veteran guard Dennis Johnson was released, I was in the minority. D.J. was not only the definition of a "gamer," making him a true winner, but was a very positive and steady influence on the team.

Following the exhibition season and some 14 games later, things have become clearer. However hard the decision was, it appears to be one that had to be made. It took oh so little time to tell.

Much of the Celtics success includes Johnson, and any true-blue Celtics fan can turn into a machine-gun mouth spitting off his accomplishments and key plays in big games.

The Celtics glorious history, of which D.J. will always be a part of, will stand until the end of time. However, in today's big business, unfortunately that was yesterday for Johnson.

Though the youthful combination of Brian Shaw, Kevin Gamble and rookie Dee Brown hardly compares with the three-guard rotation in Motown (Isiah Thomas, Joe Dumars and Vinnie Johnson) or even Dallas (Rolando Blackmon, Derek Harper and Fat Lever), they bring to the Celtics an ATHLETICISM the team hasn't had in years. They forever seem to be flashing downcourt on the wing, slashing to the hoop and finishing off fastbreaks with rim-rattling slams thanks to their speed, quickness and agility. Ah, the sweet bird of youth.

Shaw was hesitant in his rookie season, but no more. He no longer second guesses himself or harbors a fear of making mistakes.

Dee Brown is slowly shaking loose from the rookie label that sometimes stands like a cement wall in the faces of first-year players. Gamble simply fits in and suddenly has become the favorite target of Larry Bird's pin-point passes and full-length bombs and seems to have found the way length Bird and Johnson once shared.

Not only do they run the floor well and finish off fastbreaks, they have become a very harassing trio on defense and the Celtics can't ask for much more at this point.

Quite frankly, though it's nothing more than simple conjecture, this veteran NBA scribe just can't see the Celtics sitting atop the Atlantic Division with an 11-2 record after 13 games with Dennis Johnson still in the picture.

With that record comes the return of old respect and despite all the respect, in the world for D.J., things may well have been different if the winds of change never swept through the Hub.

Any first-year coach hopes to get off to a good start. But even Chris Ford couldn't have expected his career record to be 15-2 (4-0 last season) at this point. That tops the starts of Bill Russell (14-2), K.C. Jones (9-1) and Bill Fitch (10-2)... There are always two sides to every story, and the Celtics' losses this season have a place in

CELTICS PRIDE

a stretch of 9:19 in a 106-90 victory... You never know in the NBA. Dallas was unbeaten at home when they lost to Minnesota in a fabulous finish for the Wolves' nightlight films. Tyrone Corbin's tip-in with 1.3 seconds left won it... The Sixers have one for their films as well. They beat the Kings on a game-winning tip-in by Rick Mahorn with 1.4 remaining... For the sake of comparison, the Houston Rockets blasted the Knicks in Madison Square Garden, 115-88. They traveled up the Mass Turnpike a day later and lost to the Celtics, 108-95... Somehow the Lakers found a way to slow down the Denver Nuggets offense, holding them to 105 points in a 132-105 win. Denver came in averaging 132.2 points in its 10 previous games. The record for a season is 125 points a game. Yes, it was accomplished by a Denver team... Remember just a few seasons back how tough the Cleveland Cavs were when they got out of the gate fast and were simply chewing up the league? Since then they have never been the same. The change seemed to start the day they dealt Ron Harper to the Clippers... How about another comparison. The Kings lost to the Sixers at the buzzer. The Celtics handled them with relative ease... Bird has hoisted just four three-point shots in his first 12 games. Against Sacramento, a game in which he scored just nine points, he took but eight shots. Six of them were in the first half. He was back in form the next night, hoisting 28 in a big road win against Cleveland... the respect has returned in Boston. Each losing coach realized their return to the top and hasn't been afraid to admit it. The best — Dick Motta. "They are a world-class team." What a familiar ring... The Celtics weren't kidding about their new running style. Their new bumper-sticker slogan is Pride in Motion... You just never knew in the NBA. The Suns love our home to New Jersey. They best the previously unbeaten Blazers for their first win in Portland since 1983... Since he joined the Wolves, no team has been able to hold Tony Campbell below 10 points until Houston stopped him in his 947th game... The Knicks are off to a 2-5 start at home. Last season they didn't lost their fifth game at MSG until March 6... Yours truly must have been sucking too many cigars fumes from Red's stogies in a pre-season column, writing Seattle will be the sleeper when his tired brain really meant to type in Houston. By the way, the Rockets haven't exactly had Lady Luck riding on their collective shoulders. They have already lost three one-point decisions in 15 games... Rolando Blackmon recently became the all-time leading scorer in the franchise history of the Dallas Mavs... Utah's 103-92 win against the Rockets was the 600th in franchise history... Another scary thought. Two-time defending champion Detroit (12-2) is off to their best start ever... The only thing that stopped Larry Bird from joining an exclusive NBA club—20,000 points and 5,000 assists, was a wet floor in a bizarre postponement of a game at the Boston Garden when the floor became unsafe to play on in a game against Atlanta... For Celtics fans, things were just too good to be true when the Lakers began the season at 1-4. At this writing they have won five straight by an average margin of 20 points a game... The Hornets' eighth win in November was the most ever in a month by the young franchise. It came against Milwaukee, a team they had never before beaten.

Jim Bianchine is a columnist for the Newburyport Daily News. In Newburyport, Massachusetts. Jim is regularly assigned to cover the Boston Celtics.

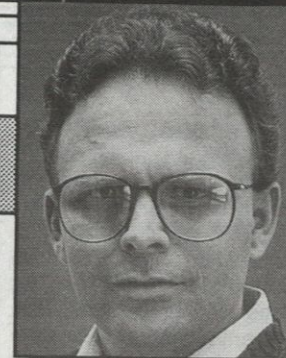
Celtics Honor Johnny Most

The Celtics honored their legendary play-by-play announcer of thirty-seven years, Johnny Most, with a night in his honor the evening of December 3rd, at halftime of the game with the Seattle SuperSonics. Most retired this season on the advice of doctors. He has been in and out of the hospital twice this autumn. "It's the end of an era, and it's been tough to adjust to," Most re-

flected. "I was part of everything for so long. But I look at it as having reached a milestone. The fact that the Celtics have honored me the way they have means an awful lot."

Red Auerbach, K.C. Jones, and Tom Heinsohn were among the luminaries who honored Most. The broadcaster was also feted at a dinner on November 29th, which featured Kevin McHale and Robert Parish among others.





By Kevin C. Doyle

Halfcourt Press

Celts Are Meshing Quite Nicely

Much has been made of the Boston Celtics' 11-2 start this season, a getaway second only to the Portland Trail Blazers (11-1) and among the better beginnings in franchise history.

What has triggered this somewhat unexpected burst?

For starters, veterans and youngsters have meshed nicely, adapting to rookie coach Chris Ford's uptempo beat while administering a series of early-season fastbreak clinics. Mixing experience with youth is a deep-rooted Celtics' formula for success, dating back to the first World Championship season under Red Auerbach in 1957.

Recently returned to the sixth man role, Kevin McHale remains every bit as dominant coming off the bench as when he did so regularly in the early and mid-1980's. The rapid maturation of Kevin Gamble at the quick forward spot and the savvy benchwork of Ford through the season's first month are other factors to consider.

However, the single biggest difference between this team and recent Celtics' editions has clearly been Ford's willingness to let the boys play. While his predecessors, Jimmy Rodgers and K.C. Jones, seemed locked into six-and-seven man rotations, Ford has expanded his bench to eight players on a regular basis.

Consequently, more players are rested and others are gaining confidence in their ability to contribute.

The biggest beneficiary has been Gamble. Through games of November 27, Gamble ranked fifth in the NBA in field goal percentage. In his seven starts, the Celtics went 7-0. Overall, the former CBA scoring champ, who was cut early in his career by Portland, was averaging 12.6 points and 27.7 minutes per game — figures equivalent to those of Robert Parish. On November 17, Gamble held league scoring leader Bernard King (30.9 ppg) to just 11 points on 4-of-21 shooting.

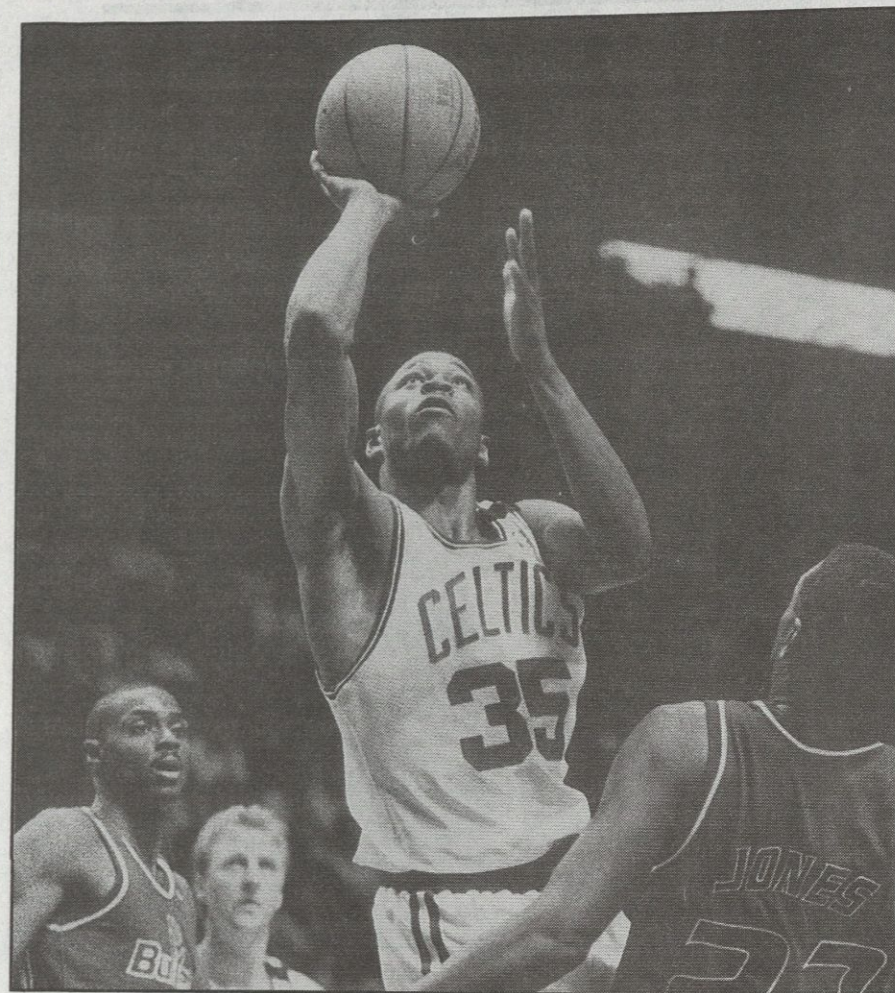
"It's a lot of fun," said Gamble, who averaged 13.9 minutes per game a year ago. "What everyone wants to do in his career is play, and being able to start and play for the Celtics is icing on the cake. Hopefully, I'll continue my success and, hopefully, we'll continue to play well as a team."

Ford's plan is seen clearly in the minutes played column of the stat sheet. The Big Three — Larry Bird (39.2 to 36.6), Parish (38.1 to 30.3) and McHale (36.1 to 33.2), have all seen their time drop a bit from a year ago.

On the other hand, Reggie Lewis' time has gone up by more than six minutes to a team-high 38.1 minutes per game, as he continues to soar into the league's upper stratosphere.

Brian Shaw, taking over for Dennis Johnson, is averaging 35.7 minutes. Philosophical and contractual differences aside, it is clear his year abroad clearly helped.

Gamble, plugged into the spot vacated by Jim Paxson, is playing 10 minutes more



Reggie Lewis' time has gone up by more than six minutes to a team-high 38.1 minutes per game.

a game than did the slow-footed Paxson a year ago. And top draft choice Dee Brown has been "Dee-lightful" during his nearly 18 minutes a night in the backcourt.

"The lineup is not set in stone. We'll go with the flow and see what happens. If you're going to be a great team, you have to have a lot of different people who can do the job. Diversity is the key for us," said Ford.

Ford has consciously spread out the time. The Celtics are winning. And, to this point, everyone seems happy.

Not a bad combination.

CURSE OF THE OILERS: An oft-heard comment following the November 28 sus-

pension of the game against Atlanta due to unsafe playing conditions was "It's the Oilers' fault." It just so happens that the NHL's Stanley Cup champs, who were in town the following evening, were prime players in the last two bizarre incidents at The Gah-den. During the 1988 Stanley Cup finals, a game was blacked out entirely. Then, this past spring, the Oilers and Bruins endured a 20-minute delay during a partial power failure. Two observations from the suspended game against the Hawks, which lasted 13 1/2 minutes: 1. After spending the past couple of seasons blaming departed coach Mike Fratello for their woes, the lifeless Hawks had better

start looking in the mirror and facing the real culprits; 2. This latest incident underscored the need for a new arena to replace the Garden — the old lady has lost her charm and is simply a decrepit shell.

LONG LIVE THE KING: At age 33, the Bullets' Bernard King is winning praise from all corners for his remarkable comeback from the knee injuries that sidelined him for but six games from 1985-87, and his re-emergence as a scoring machine. King, the league's scoring leader through November 30, and the 1985 scoring champ as well, has to be the league's most overworked go-to guy. Jeff Malone is in Utah, John Williams is overweight and Ladell Eackles only recently signed his contract, leaving King with little offensive help. He had 44 points on November 3 against Chicago. "This isn't what I want to do every night, but we have a lot of people who are unknown," said King, who turns 34 on December 4 and will have to carry a club that has seven players with less than two year's experience on its roster.

AND ANOTHER THING: In case you didn't know it, Johnson, for many years the most common last name in the NBA, was surpassed by a flurry of Williams on opening-night rosters. Jaysen, Scott and Kenny Williams came into the league this year, joining Buck, John, Hot Rod, Michael, Herb and Reggie for a total of nine... Ken "The Animal" Bannister of the L.A. Clippers, whose career free throw percentage is .503, is donating \$.50 to the Los Angeles Zoo for every free throw he misses this season. After missing 23 of his first 33 attempts this year, he seems well on the way to reaching his \$5,000 cap by the All-Star break... This year there were 10 CBA veterans on opening-day NBA roster, accounting for more than 12 percent of NBA personnel... Magic Johnson, the player Larry Bird has said is the best he's ever played against, became the second guard in NBA history to reach 9,000 assists when he fed James Worthy for a hoop in a 112-111 loss to Phoenix on November 13. Johnson joined the "Big O," Oscar Robertson, in that exclusive club... In the spirit of the holiday, the Celtics' Reggie Lewis purchased 300 turkeys to distribute to needy Boston families for Thanksgiving... Here's hoping that Miami Heat forward Billy Thompson and guard Milt Wagner like one another. The two were high school teammates on a state championship team in Camden, N.J., College teammates on the 1986 NCAA champs at Louisville, and NBA cohorts with the 1988 champion L.A. Lakers before arriving in Miami.

Kevin Doyle is the Sports Editor of the Newburyport Daily News, in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Kevin is regularly assigned to cover the Boston Celtics.

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20,000 Points And Counting

Larry Bird Joins An Elite Membership

By Jim Bianchine

Boston superstar Larry Bird lives by a higher source than most athletes. The only thing that could possibly have stopped him from reaching a sparkling career milestone was an act of God.

Mother nature decided to give Boston a break on November 28 against the Atlanta Hawks, the eve on which Bird was to surpass the 20,000 career point mark. Earlier in the month against Utah he reached the coveted 5,000 assist plateau. The two combined qualified him for the exclusive 20,000 point, 5,000 assist club.

The elite membership included Oscar Robertson, Jerry West, former Celtics great John Havlicek and Kareem Abdul Jabbar, with Bird to become just the fifth member all time.

When unseasonably warm weather caused the ice to melt in the Boston Garden underneath the fabled perquet playing surface, the court became too slippery to play and the game was postponed in the second period. Bird's plans were temporarily put on ice as well.

Two nights later the Washington Bullets needed a little divine intervention if they hoped to stop Bird, just 12 points shy of 20,000 points. They did their best in the first half as Bird and the rest of the cold-shooting Celtics were quieted as the anticipation mounted in the ancient mecca of basketball.

After an eight-point first half, the living legend didn't let down a legion of loyalists as he and his teammates got things rolling against the perennially pesky Bullets in the third period.

Bird drilled a three-pointer with 9:43 remaining to leave him just one point shy of the mark as the deafening chant of "Larry...Larry...Larry" echoed throughout the building.

Then the moment in time that history was made came with 8:19 to play in the third period. Washington's Harvey Grant was dogging Bird with an intense in-your-face brand of defense. Bird took the ball on the right wing, drove left, fittingly around a pick by Robert Parish, stopped and popped at the foul line, letting a patented 15-footer fly.

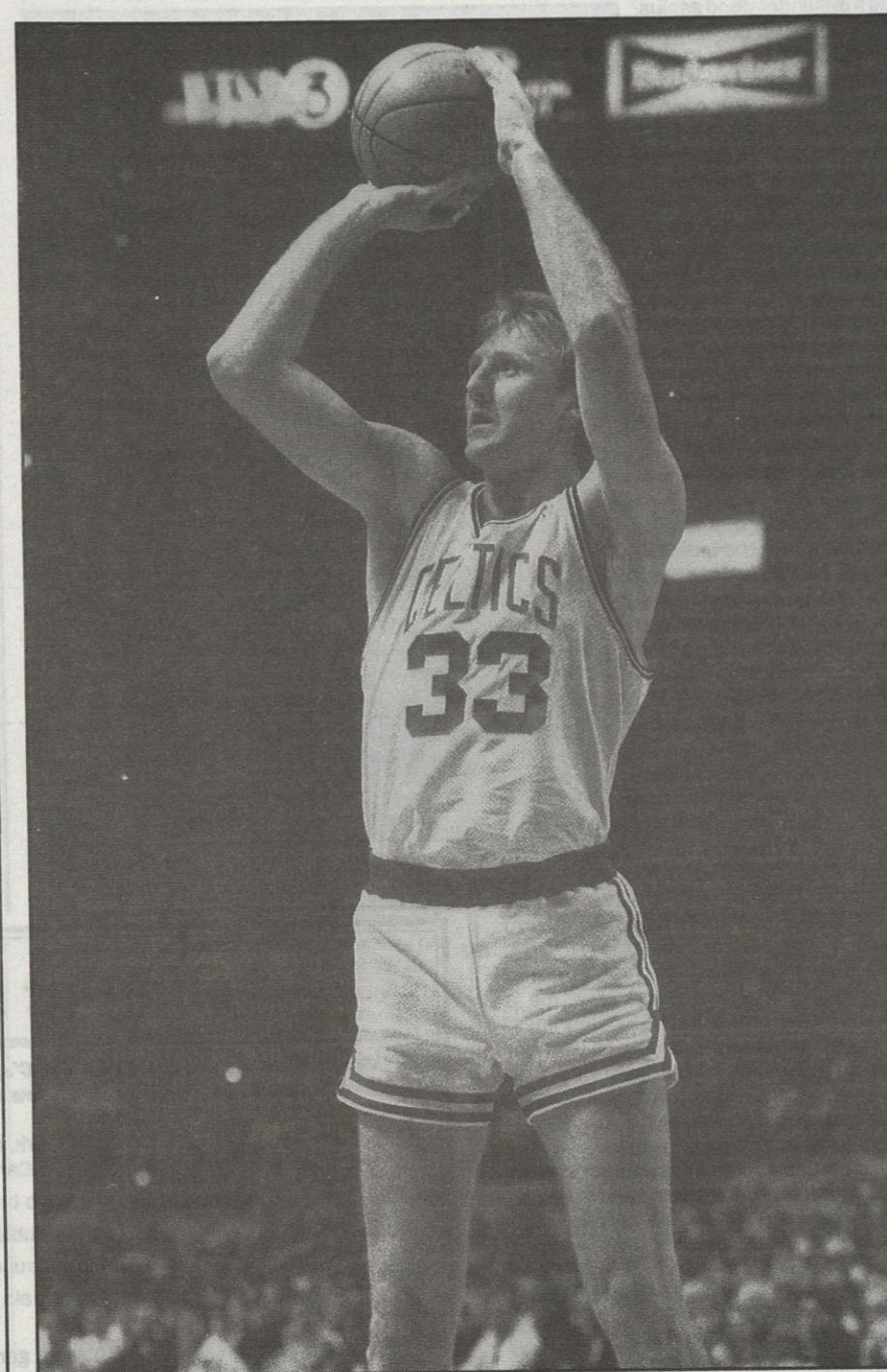
The crowd simply exploded as it ripped through the net as history was made.

The moment was fleeting. Few at the time would really grasp the true magnitude of the accomplishment. The game was held up briefly as the ball was given to an official of the Basketball Hall of Fame where so much Bird memorabilia is ticketed, but not before a little theatrics.

When given the ball, Bird faked as if he were going to heave it into the crowd as they stood wildly applauding the accomplishment.

"The ball has to go the Hall of Fame. If not, the ball was going up there in the top deck," said Bird.

"He played a little trick on us with that fake," said Celtics Public Relations Director, Jeff Twiss. "He was kidding with us before the game that he was going to throw the ball up in the stands. I really thought he was. Someone would have gotten killed. They would have jumped from the balcony



Bird: "A lot of great players come and go. I'll just be another one."

for that ball," said a relieved Twiss.

The entire scene, as brief as it was, was typically Larry Bird. He didn't want any fuss made over the monumental accomplishment.

Bird's good friend Joe Qatato said, "To make a big deal over it would not be Larry. He didn't want any speeches or anything like that."

Bird, the 15th man in NBA history to surpass the 20,000 point plateau said, "It's really not that big of a deal. I wanted to get it over with. I really haven't been giving it that much thought," said Bird, who has never been one to overemphasize individual accomplishments.

Actually Bird was ready to get it all over with 48 hours earlier against Atlanta when he started fast and scored six quick points. "I was really in the groove that night, hitting my shots against Atlanta. I had my shot

working for me. Tonight it was a little tough to get it going," said Bird who rebounded from a 3-for-10 shooting first half to finish with a team-high 21 points.

"I was just trying to get in some kind of flow tonight. I had a lot of opportunities to score, but didn't put the ball in the hole," said Bird, all business, trying to play down all the post-game hysteria in the locker room.

Bird was about the only person on the planet that didn't think the accomplishment was a "big deal."

"Larry is phenomena. That's a helluva accomplishment," said teammate Kevin McHale, following the team's 123-95 win.

"It's just a great milestone. He's been a fantastic player for all those years. He's played so hard for so long and I'm happy for him. His doggedness to the game and his ability to play under any adversity, hurt or

whatever, makes him a true consummate professional," said McHale.

Asked if he would like to reach the milestone, first achieving the 5,000 assists, McHale joked, "5,000 assists, I hope not."

"It's a great accomplishment to score 20,000 points—but 5,000 assists and all those rebounds is a tremendous combination," said Celtics coach Chris Ford.

For Bird, it was a typical night. He scored 21 points, grabbed 14 rebounds, blocked three shots and handed out five assists.

"I don't go and look to see how many points I have all the time, but I guess 20,000 is a lot of points. I just want to stay around and score some more," said Bird, just a few days prior to his 34th birthday.

For Bird, it was all part of a days work as he has never been statistic oriented. But he did speak of his 5,000 assists and in doing so remembered old friend Dennis Johnson.

"When I got to 5,000 assists I thought of D.J. He gave me a lot of assists. He always talked to me about the importance of assists and I know assists meant more to him than anything," said Bird.

Such an accomplishment naturally draws comparisons with the fellow legends of the game. Asked to compare himself with the other immortals, Bird simply said, "A lot of great players come and go. I'll just be another one."

Bird, forced to answer more questions than Charles Manson, handled the media battalion like he does the basketball and showed his humorous side.

"If they paid me by the points I would have gone out and scored 50,000," he laughed.

Bird was caught up far more in the flow of the game than in the wave of reporters' questions in the aftermath. He rammed home a rare dunk, drained three treys for the first time this season (prior he never had more than one) and flashed a little razzle-dazzle in the third period when the Celtics started to blow a close game wide-open.

He whipped a behind-the-back bounce pass to Dee Brown on a fastbreak that sent the gathered throng into a frenzy in the third period.

The great Bird moments are many over a span of more than 800 games in a Celtics uniform. Who will ever forget his back-to-back buzzer beaters in 1985 to beat Portland and Detroit in succession. There was the never-to-be-forgotten 60-point explosion in New Orleans against the Hawks as he had the Atlanta players cheering him on from their bench.

There was his triple-double in the NBA title clincher against Houston in 1986, the famed shootout for Eastern supremacy against Atlanta's Dominique Wilkins in May of 1988, and the epic game at the Capital Centre against Washington in 1987 when he hit the game-tying shot with four seconds left and the game-winner with no time left on the clock in overtime.

The most memorable — THE STEAL of an inbound pass against Detroit in game five of the 1987 Eastern Division final play-off series.

On November 30, he hit a 15-footer that may someday become the greatest moment of them all.



9

Shaw's Report Card

Brian Is Determined To Take Charge

By Bob Schron

Brian Shaw, the Celtic lead guard, walked out of practice that November afternoon. There had been a chill in the air that day, and the Californian was prepared, a woolen top coat. Yet, the protection failed to alleviate a subtle feeling of inadequacy: Two days before the Celtics had been devastated in Milwaukee, 119-91, a game seemingly lost, and by this significant gap, from literally the opening minute, when Chris Ford was forced to call a twenty-second timeout five possessions into the game. Shaw, beleaguered much of the summer as his contractual status was determined, had real reasons to be perplexed. As the point guard of the team, he had felt a

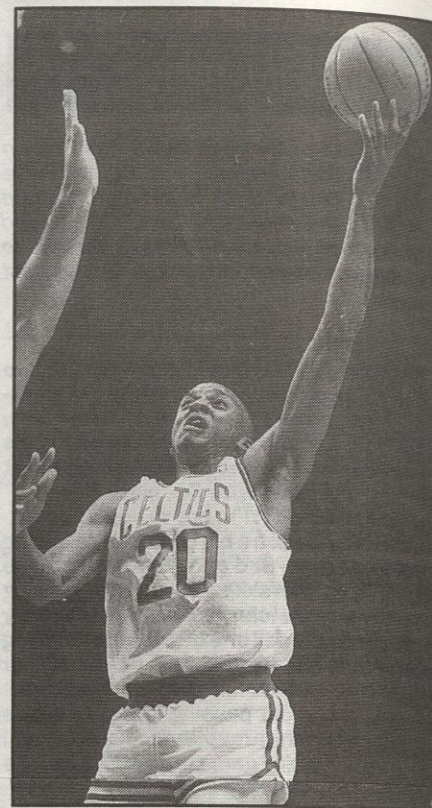
responsibility against the Bucks which never materialized. The Celtics were disorganized for forty-eight minutes, and it was gloomily apparent all night, in front of a sneering, jeering crowd at the Bradley Center, the crowd which in 1983 had mocked the Celtics when the Bucks swept Boston four straight and out of the playoffs. Shaw wasn't on the team then, but this day after practice, his spirits were comparably down cast. Looking back on the moment, the Celtics' first crossroads of the 1990-91 season, Shaw recalls thinking that he was determined to take charge.

"This team needs more direction," he said to himself then. "The guys are looking to me to handle the ball and establish the tempo. We need more direction."

Happier days lay ahead. The following game, Ford installed Kevin Gamble as the

starting off-guard, the Celtics overwhelmed the Jazz, a contender for the Western Conference championship. The Celtics weren't defeated for three weeks afterward, and the team's transition game flowed, with Shaw running things.

Shaw, who was averaging 13.2 ppg with 7.8 assists and 5.6 rebounds per game, (his assists per game within the NBA's top twenty), was the topic of discussion with several experts around the Celtic scene last week. These men were asked to address different areas of Shaw's game, including leadership, playmaking, shooting, defense, and both his ability to direct the team as well as his adapting back into the Celtics' system. Highlights from the interviews with Dave Gavitt, head of the Celtics, Bob Ryan of *The Boston Globe*, Chris Ford, assistant coach Don Casey,



Shaw: "The guys are looking to me to handle the ball and establish tempo."

Robert Parish and Celtic scout Don Mead follow.

Leadership. "You just don't replace a Dennis Johnson easily," remarked Parish, a close friend and teammate of Johnson since 1983. "I think Brian's jumped into the void and played admirably. I also believe Brian's succeeding for two reasons: He's a complementary type of player, and he's played well enough to help change the team to a running style, which is good, because we've been playing halfcourt ball for a long time here."

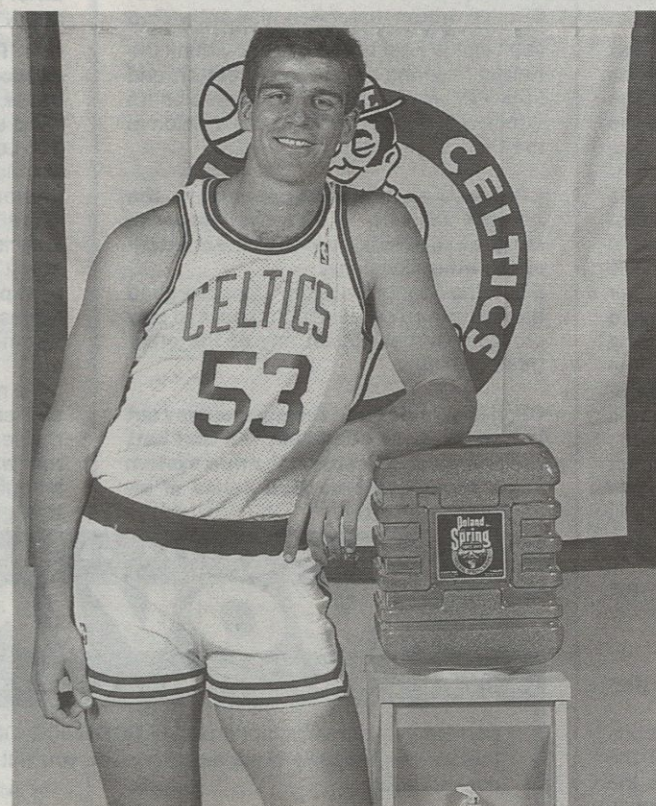
Gavitt was particularly high on Shaw's performance in this area. "It's been one of his most important achievements," Gavitt said. "He's come back to the team and has the respect of the veterans." Gavitt wasn't surprised by this, however. "I've seen Brian grow and develop as a player since he was in college and with the U.S. Olympic Team in 1988 (when Shaw was the final cut). People didn't know too much about him, but he was unfazed. He showed he could be a take-charge type."

Playmaking. "Brian's shown he has a point guard mentality," offered Casey. "He sees the floor real well on the move and he's done a great job of diagnosing defenses. I think he'll improve here — with time and experience." Ryan thought he's been the key to the faster game, "because he's taking the ball, pushing it up, unafraid of improvising in the open floor. That's a departure. In past season, the Celtics seemed hesitant to trust their ability to run."

"What I've been pleased about," stated Ford, "is that he's been able to distribute the ball so well. It's probably the most difficult quality of a good point guard. He

Continued on page 19...

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Reggie Shines In Many Diverse Ways

Lewis Helps The Less Fortunate

By Bob Schron

In the midst of the Thanksgiving holiday, as Reggie Lewis' fourth NBA season continued to place him higher and higher among the list of best swing players in basketball, Lewis, Brian Shaw, Jerome Stanley (agent of Lewis and Shaw), Lewis's companion and manager, Donna Harris and Leesa Hicks changed roles and gave back — again — to the black community in Boston. For the holiday, Lewis decided to purchase three hundred turkeys to give to the disadvantaged in Boston. The event, covered by WEEI's and WILD's Willie Maye, proved to be a welcomed contribution. As Maye noted last week, "There are a lot of people (in the Roxbury section of Boston) who are too poor to afford the luxury of a turkey, even though it seems everyone has a turkey on Thanksgiving."

Lewis, who had held clinics in both Boston and in Baltimore for the past several summers, continues to maintain a clear perspective on where he is both as a person and as a player.

"It was just something I wanted to do," Lewis commented. "I made the announcement on a show I do with Willie. People are in need — I realize there are limits (to what I'm able to do.) But I'm willing to give back what I can."

Lewis, who was the focal point of the team in his second season, when Larry Bird went out virtually the entire year with Achilles tendon surgery, similarly has found an ideal complementary spot with the Celtics, as Bird has returned, the latter still among the preeminent players in the game.

Lewis's field goal attempts dropped by over ten percent last season from 1988-89 when he averaged 18.5 ppg to lead the team. But ego hasn't ever been a problem for Lewis; when the Celtics drafted Lewis as the twentieth player in the whole draft in 1987, the team uncovered a genuine jewel, a player with near-superstar potential who possesses an ideal complementary personality for a basketball team.

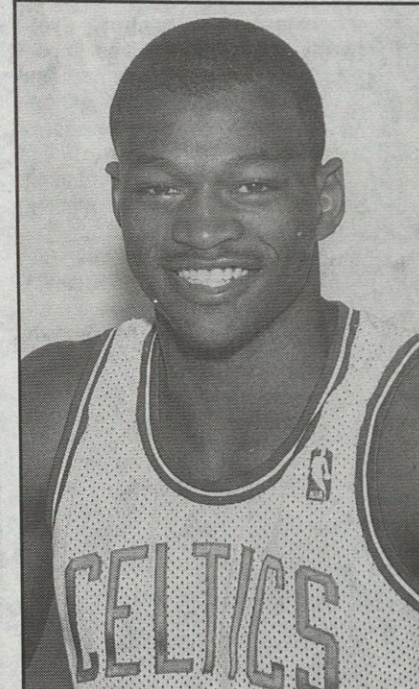
The latter quality brought him into immediate favor with the veterans: On the Celtics, like other teams, a hierarchy exists. The longer the player has been on the team, the more he's able to control the offensive opportunities. Basketball isn't different than other lines of work. Youth must earn their spurs.

Lewis laughs at that. "The veterans were always helpful to me. And last year, when Larry was back and I was playing well, DJ (Dennis Johnson) used to pass me the ball, and then I'd pass it back. DJ would look at me, kind of smirk, and say, 'Well, if you're going to pass it back, and not going to shoot, then I won't pass the ball to you again!'"

Lewis, who was bothered with a back strain earlier this season, refused to talk much about it, but its effect was noticed on his best friend and teammate, Brian Shaw.

"You'd see it when he was playing in two different areas. First, at the beginning of the game because it took him time to get loose. Then, if he had to go out for a rest, he'd be dragging, because his back would stiffen up on him."

"(The back) did bother me," acknowl-



Lewis: "People are in need — I realize there are limits, but I'm willing to give back what I can."

edged Lewis, "but you play through those injuries. We've got a really good rhythm to what we're doing right now. The key to the team is the way we're playing defense. Not individually. On a team basis."

Yet, increasingly, much as another potential offensive superstar, Cedric Maxwell, did in the early eighties, when Bird was ascending to Olympus, Lewis has taken on difficult defensive assignments — including Dominique Wilkins, Dennis Rodman and Charles Barkley.

"It's in the nature of the position," said Chris Ford, who has been a Lewis fan for years. "The best players in the game, the ones who combine athleticism and basketball skill, are the small forwards."

"But I wouldn't classify Reggie as a 'classic stopper'" assistant coach Don Casey thought. "Reggie's playing 'contain' defense against some of (the best small forwards). I'm not certain you'd want Reggie in that role at this particular point in time. He's still developing a scorer's mentality, which is what you want from him, because of his explosiveness and his court sense."

"I think what makes Reggie Lewis a very good player is his pride in his play, period."

Casey's argument is sound, irrefutable, because if one looks back on this great Celtic 1990-91 beginning, Reggie Lewis's clutch offensive play, particularly his play down the stretch in road wins (an indispensable part of title contending seasons, these road triumphs). Lewis's offensive play determined victory in New York, New Jersey, Washington, and Cleveland. When those teams challenged, there was Lewis, dropping jumpers from 18'-20', or now powering to the basket, his offensive presence seemingly clearing out a predetermined path to the goal.

Asked of his increased presence in Boston, Lewis remains unassuming, but provides a way of understanding why he's able to star while still understated. "What's been important for me is that the veterans have respected me, and it's a feeling of

acceptance. So I'll go out and take charge — because they want and expect me to deliver."

"I'm gratified with the way we've been playing. In the beginning, I thought we needed to develop more of a killer instinct, to put teams away when we had them down. But we've become better at doing that, too."

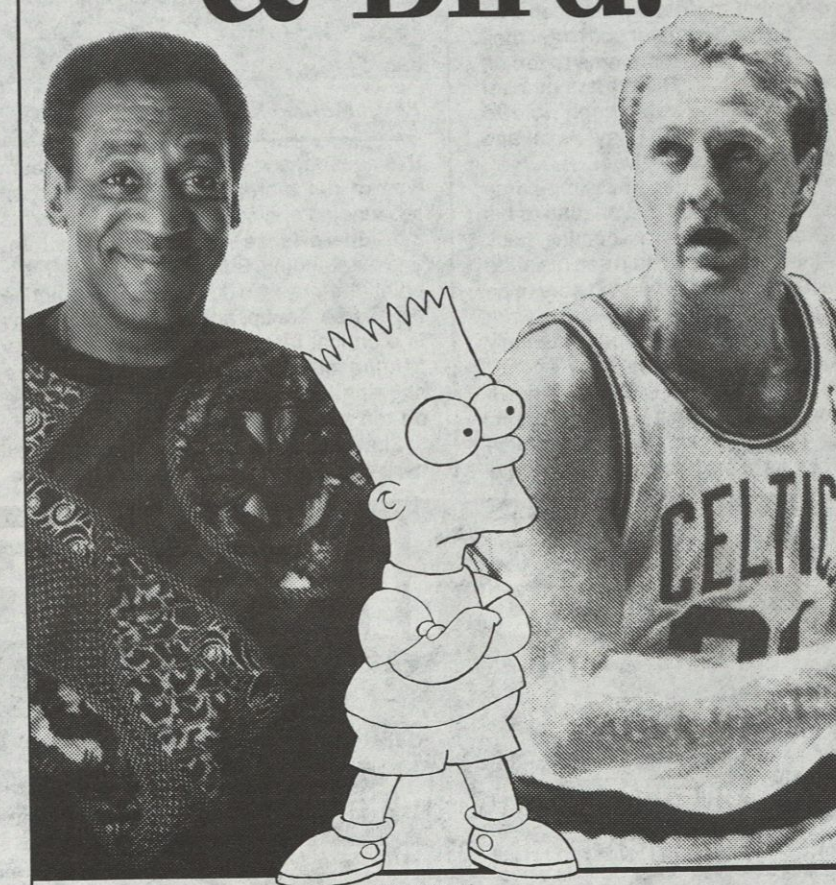
Maybe Lewis' Thanksgiving gesture illustrates a different facet of Lewis's character entirely. "Reggie remembers very well what it was like to grow up and during the holiday, understand what humor and

need were like. There still are some very hard times for a lot of people...He considered buying more, but then decided against it. But people were lined up for hours and hours (the distribution was done at Roxbury Community College).

"Already though for Christmas, he's planning to be visiting some hospitals in conjunction with Reebok and the Celtics."

Lewis smiled slowly when asked about all of this. "It's just something you do," he says softly, claiming the "you" in the statement in order to blend seamlessly into both his past and his expanding present.

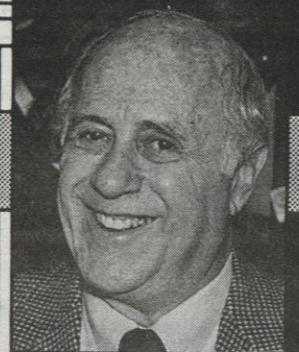
Bill, Bart & Bird.



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By Red Auerbach

Red On Roundball

Fighting Our Way Into Contention

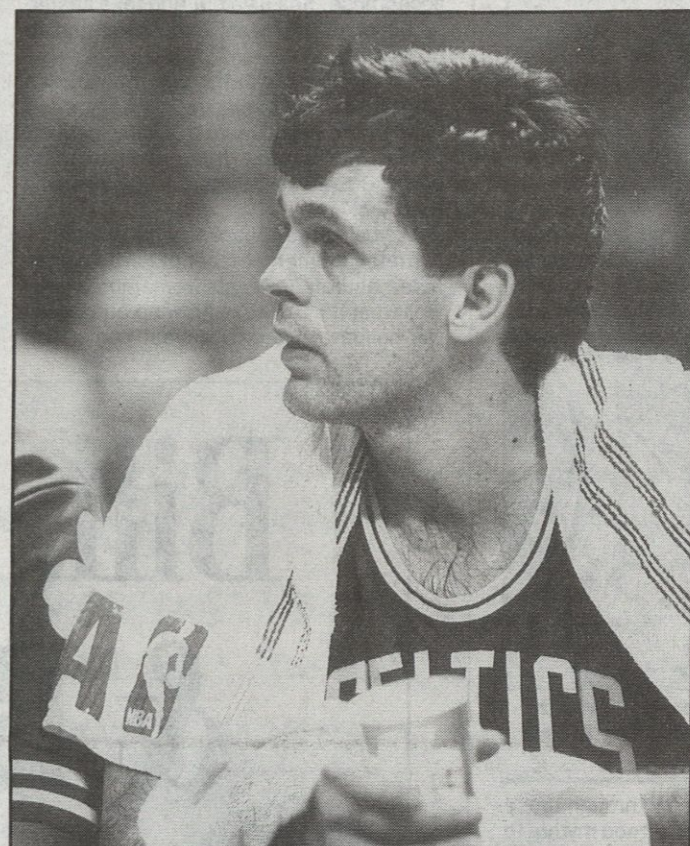
Propelled into contention with strong defense and a good, aggressive running game, we moved into first place in late November.

Larry Bird, Kevin McHale and Brian Shaw have been our leaders; at the same time, we've seen Chris Ford do an excellent job of coaching the ballclub. Now that we've begun well, we'll need to sustain our productive play against teams such as Detroit, Philadelphia, Portland, Chicago.

The Celtics have perennially been a team that others shoot for. But I feel strongly that since we've gained so much confidence in what we're doing, and most of our players are playing so well, as long as we go out there and play our game, we'll be all right. It's hard to say right now where we stand in relation to the rest of the league. But I am pleased with the way we've made ourselves into a team that attacks, offensively and defensively.

What I like about the situation is that we look as if we're playing the game right out there. We're defending end to end and forcing opponents both to start their offense out farther on the perimeter and to get their offense in action with more time taken off the 24-second clock. There are a number of different reasons we've been able to take charge like this with Larry, Kevin and Brian the key players involved.

Every year Larry Bird comes into camp with a different addition, or variation to his game. Even when he was coming back from his injury, (and you could see his pride was affected because he wasn't able to do the things he once could do), Bird's work ethic wasn't affected. If it had been humanly possible for Larry to come back sooner from his surgery, I think everybody knows he would have. But even if he wasn't out on the court, he was thinking the game, studying it. When he came back last season and



Kevin McHale has been a key ingredient to our first place start.

point shot, even when it was important to our success in the mid-eighties. Now Shaw's here, pushing the ball up the floor, defending fullcourt, rebounding very well from the guard slot. I've written here before that I think he's a leader type, and he's shown this quality. He's very close to Reggie Lewis and he's been responsible for Reggie's emergence as a player with genuine superstar potential. He's also helped Dee Brown along; there had been talk that the two of them might clash, especially when Brian was going through all of the trouble during the summer. But that's all it was: talk. The two support each other and play well together. I don't think it's that important, when the two are on

this season, and with thinking on the team was to run more, Larry concentrated on rebounding and passing, in addition to his individual offense which is both important and outstanding. But you'll notice his three-point attempts are down. You'll also notice his assists are up, and that his rebounding is a critical factor in our fast break. He's fighting for the tough rebounds, and we're showing teams we're capable of running off ten and twelve point runs.

Shaw of course has been the key player here. I was never a proponent of the three-

the floor together, if one or the other is the point guard on every possession. As long as the team is in its offense and playing well, either player can take the responsibility of getting the team into motion. Players have to read situations on the floor, and both Shaw and Dee Brown do that well. The point in that Brian isn't threatened by anything and this is a positive influence on the chemistry of the ballclub.

Which leads us to Kevin McHale. As usual, Kevin has been vocal about making sure the team plays well and by being

public about his indifference of whether he starts or comes off the bench. Don't forget, Kevin McHale is a superstar. His personality also affects how things go on the floor, and in practice as well. McHale does the little things; at practice, he's always the last to leave, and a significant reason is that he's staying late to work with Joe Kleine, Eddie Pinckney, Michael Smith and Stojko Vrankovic with their inside games. He's a leader type, but he's also willing to take direction, especially from Chris Ford, who he respects and admires.

And our offense, constantly in motion, has really brought the best out of Kevin McHale's game. He's consistently been one of the best in the league at running the floor, so if he's playing backup center or power forward, he's been beating his man down the floor. And since the defense is backing up on its heels and in flux, Kevin isn't as vulnerable to the double-team as he has been in the past four or five years. In the low post on offense, there have been none better.

All of this is so positive, and though it doesn't guarantee anything, it certainly puts us right in contention. Chris Ford has shown that the players are willing to play it his way, but we've been going with eight guys for the most part and I'm not sure that's enough. The league is tough and over a long season, you have to be ready for injuries. Philadelphia may lack effort with the loss of Johnny Dawkins. Patrick may be trying to do too much for the Knicks, who have been inconsistent. In the West, Danny Ainge has given Portland plenty: talent, experience, competitiveness. Right now they're playing with confidence, and that makes talented teams that much better. But it's early, and as our former coach, K.C. Jones, told me, not only are there six teams out there who think they are good, they think they can win the Western Conference. Portland's averaged 124.5 ppg offensively and they've been outrunning teams, but it won't be easy. The Lakers, Phoenix, San Antonio, Utah and Houston, with Akeem Olajuwon, will be in there knocking each other off.

You can't predict what will happen during an eighty-two game season. Teams get hot, teams get injured. Everything can change suddenly. I can't predict the Celtics will win a championship. I can say though that at this point, we're definitely among this strong group of contenders.

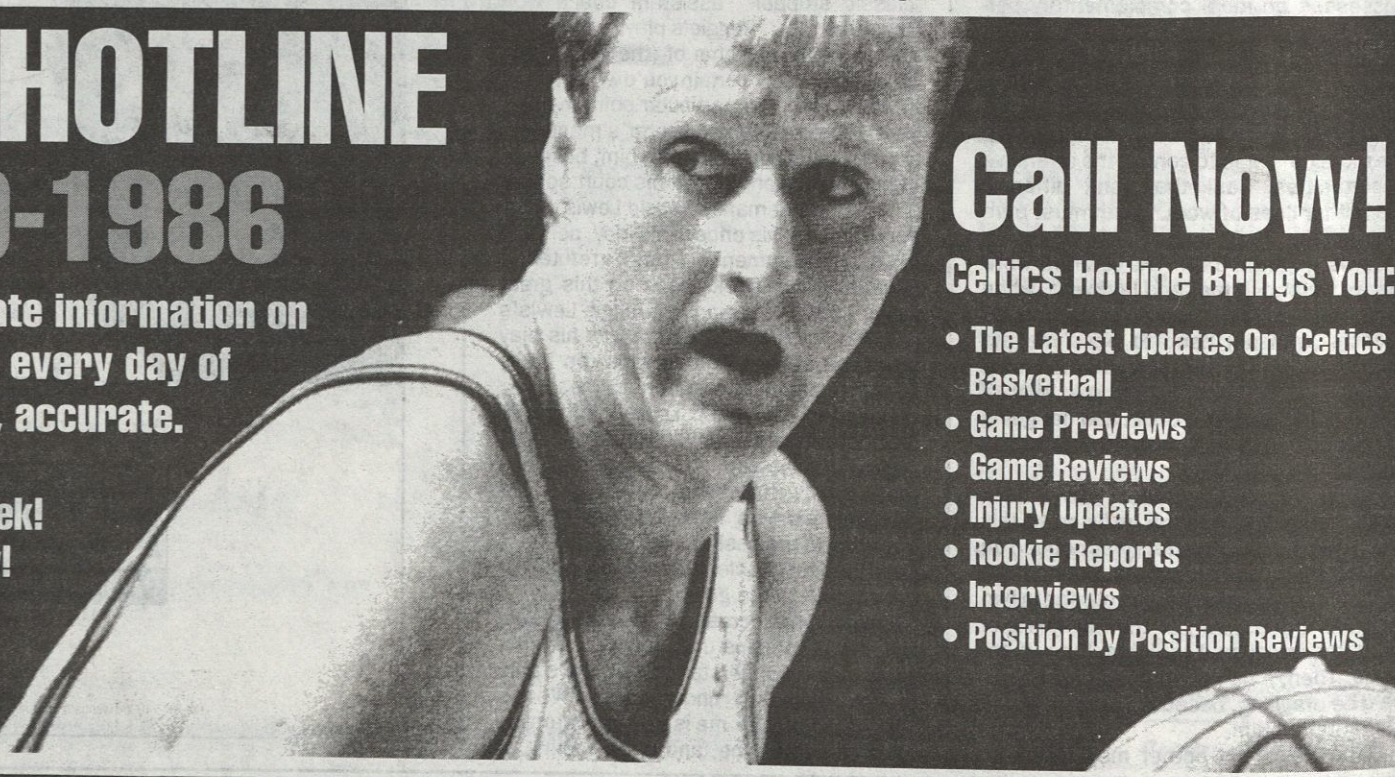
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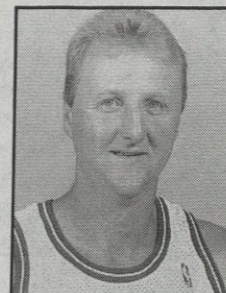
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Perspective

Why aren't the Celtics taking more 3-point shots these days?

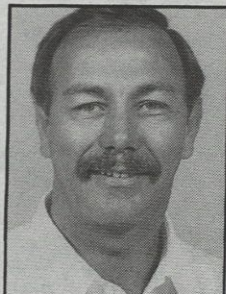
In recent days, the Celtics have been scrutinized for their lack of attempting the 3-point shot. It is also ironic, considering their head coach was a 3-point bomber for the Celtics, in his playing days. The players reacted to this question.

LARRY BIRD: I've always said that if it's there and I'm open, I'm going to take it. But it really hasn't been part of our game this year. I'm not going to step back over the line just so I can take a 3.



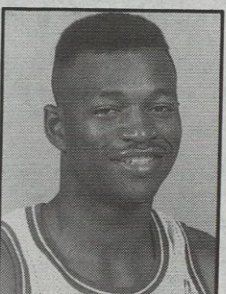
Larry Bird

CHRIS FORD: The 3-point shot should only be there if you've got guys who can take it and make it. I think Larry Bird and Kevin McHale are capable of hitting it, and I've seen a few other guys in practice like Dee Brown drop them down pretty regularly. I have no qualms with guys taking it or not taking it, but right now I'm very happy with the way the players have been taking the ball to the basket. You get a lot more results during the course of a 48 minute basketball game driving to the hoop than you do launching 3's.



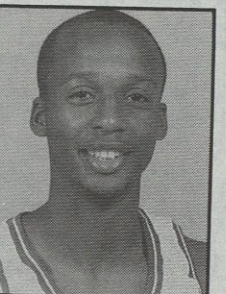
Chris Ford

REGGIE LEWIS: I don't think it matters that much that we're not taking them. Right now, we're winning and everybody seems to be getting the shots that they like. We're not thinking about 3-point shots right now, but if the good shooters are behind the line and they're open I think they'll take it.



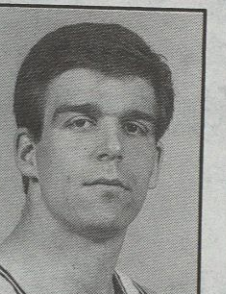
Reggie Lewis

BRIAN SHAW: I think we can live without the 3-pointer. We have some people who can shoot it, but we really haven't needed it yet with the style of play we've been running. When and if it's needed, though, I think we'll be able to pull it out of the hat.

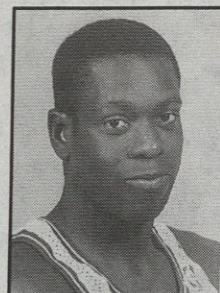


Brian Shaw

JOE KLEINE: I don't think it's that big a deal that we haven't been shooting the 3's. I think that if a player on this team is comfortable taking it and they're open they'll take it. We're really not hunting out any particular shot right now, though. Chris (Ford) is just looking for us to get the best shots we possibly can everytime down floor.

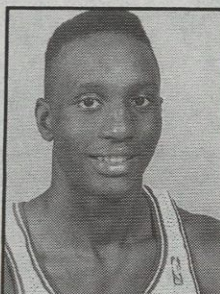


Joe Kleine



Ed Pinckney

ED PINCKNEY: I don't think it's really a big deal at all that the guys aren't taking 3-pointers. We do have players who have been working on it in practice who I think could hit it in games, but right now we're getting good results by taking the ball in close, so why change.



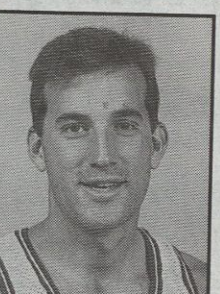
Dee Brown

DEE BROWN: I don't think the 3-pointer necessarily has to be a part of our offense. The 3-pointer is just one small part of the game and we've been able to win a lot of games without using it that extensively. If we have a need to take it, I think we will, but right now we're pushing the ball up well and getting a lot of easy shots, so there really hasn't been a need to do anything other than what we have been.



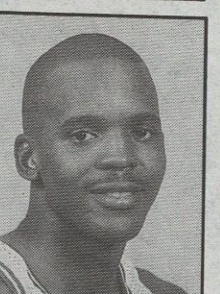
Don Casey

DON CASEY: I don't recall Chris ever saying to anyone not to shoot it. It's just that the running game has been on so much that we've been getting easier, closer in shots. Right now, to me, it seems the talk about us not taking 3-pointers has been much to do about nothing.



Michael Smith

MICHAEL SMITH: I don't feel we need the 3-pointers. It can obviously be a big plus if you've got somebody who can come in and hit it consistently, but I don't consider it a liability that we haven't been using it.



Kevin Gamble

KEVIN GAMBLE: The thing is we're not going into games looking for the 3-point shot opportunities. If it's there and we need it, there are a few people who can hit it. I think that the two players on the team who could get the most 3-point opportunities, though, are Larry and Kevin McHale, because of the way our fast break is run with them coming up as the trailers.

CELTICS PRIDE

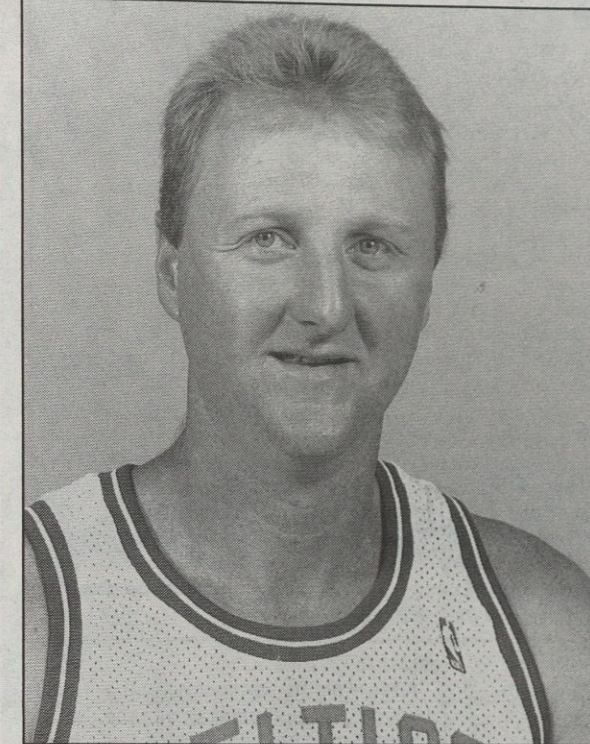
Innerview

Larry Bird Enjoys This Team

By Bob Schron

During the week before he scored his 20,000th point in the NBA, one of the best players in basketball history, Larry Bird, was interviewed. The great Bird, three time NBA champion, two-time play-off Most Valuable Player and winner of the regular season MVP three consecutive seasons (1984-86, the only player who wasn't a center to accomplish this feat), was staging something of an aesthetic comeback this year. Last season, bouncing back from Achilles tendon surgery, nearly career-ending, and struggling to regain his conditioning and form after a year off, Bird struggled — with his game, with the team's playing style, with the team at times...

In spite of this, he averaged 24.3 ppg scoring average, his rebounding was the best it had been in several seasons, and his 562 assists led all forwards. "The stats only report part of the story," says Dick Harter, former Hornets' coach and now color commentator for Detroit television. "What sets Bird apart is his competitive nature. He can't take losing."



Bird: "Guys are playing better, playing the game the way it should be played."

CELTICS PRIDE: Bob Ryan, your co-author in your autobiography, has expressed surprise you've taken to the new running game of the Celtics so well, that you're playing with so much enthusiasm this year. Is he right?

LARRY BIRD: I play with enthusiasm every year. We are playing better this season, and it just makes basketball more fun in general. This year, we have guys who get along with each other, and it's different than it has been the past few years. Guys are playing better, playing the game the way it should be played. People co-operating and winning has produced more enthusiasm on the entire team, it isn't just me.

CP: How good can the team be?

LB: If we continue to do the things we do well, and this year it's meant running more, and we play smart, then I believe we'll contend for the championship. Detroit is still the champion. Playing them this month and next will tell me something more about that. But sometimes I think we may be a player away.

CP: Last year was frustrating to you. What were the reasons, beyond the fact

the team didn't win?

LB: You've answered your own question, because winning is what matters in this game. But overall, it was unhappy, and I was disappointed Jimmy Rodgers was fired because of it. What was different than in the past was that we had guys who had come from other teams who hadn't had the championships under their belt that guys I used to play with had. We'd try and work defensive switches for example, but the instinctive togetherness just wasn't happening. Little details contribute to winning. They all add up.

CP: Added up to the defeat in the first round to New York.

LB: It was very similar to when we were swept by the Milwaukee Bucks in 1983. Bill Fitch, a coach I respect and admire, coached his last game for us in that series. A very unpleasant experience and it's something I hope I don't go through again.

CP: At this point in your career, is the game as much fun as it once was?

LB: It isn't. I enjoy basketball, playing basketball. But you have to prepare more

as you get older (Bird, in his 12th season, will have turned 34 as CP goes to press). Weights, conditioning — and I don't like the travel and the waiting around before games.

CP: You've closed in on two significant milestones, scoring your 20,000th point, and your 5,000th assist. Is there special meaning?

LB: Sure. I played twelve years, so it's an indication of consistency and endurance. But winning championships is the only statistic that means anything to me.

Championships, and the people you've played with along the way. Robert (Parish), Kevin (McHale) and I are the ones who are here now, who really remember what the great teams here were like (as players). Guys like Max (Cedric Maxwell), DJ (Dennis Johnson) and M.L. Carr were great players and super teammates.

I got a lot of points along the way and won a lot of awards. But as time goes by and I look back, I realize more and more — and have realized for a long time now — that it was not my skill and the way those guys looked for me down the stretch. When the game was on the line, the ball was in my hands, and the picks were there. Solid.

CP: Which is why there's such great timing on the pick and roll with Robert.

LB: That's right. Repetition, repetition. Then you have another sense of what Robert's going to do, and when he'll roll.

CP: You were very supportive of Bill Fitch, even when people in Boston were down on him. What do you think of the Nets this year?

LB: They're better, for a few reasons. First, I think they'll win, because they'll see how good a coach Bill is. Secondly, they have more talent, including guys like Derrick Coleman and Mookie Blaylock. Bill's biggest challenge is to get them to play hard for forty-eight.

CP: In an interview in The Boston Globe with Jackie MacMullan recently you es-

entially conceded that your best days were behind you, and that you could accept the fact that you weren't the first option all the time in the offense. Could you discuss that?

LB: Physically, some nights my whole game isn't always going to be there. But I still have a world of confidence in my game. I'll be there when the game is on the line. I may not be the best player in the game but then again I may be. I really think that the better our team is, the better my game looks. My game stays the same. Which I think is pretty damn good.

CP: The team has gone to a quicker lineup, and that's placed you at the power forward position, with Reggie Lewis and Kevin Gamble switching back and forth between the small forward and the off-guard. Safe to say you've concentrated more on rebounding this year?

LB: It's not safe to say that. I play the total game. Moving the ball is critical to the team game, and I do that. Keeping in position, offensively and defensively. Playing natural — that's what made this season so satisfying to this point. We have guys on the team who are playing basketball the right way.

CP: Many around the league now think you have lesser "status," that now Karl Malone and Charles Barkley are the perennial 1st Team NBA players. Response?

LB: Status! I honestly don't care at all what others might think. I've never played for "status." I play the game the same way, all the time. To do everything possible to win. I've accomplished things I'm very proud of. But all-star teams haven't ever been a reason I've played, or at least they haven't been for a long, long time.

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Celtics Pride is presently mailed second class which means that delivery should be relatively fast. In many instances delivery has not been fast enough for some of our subscribers. We too have been frustrated by the slowness of delivery.

Because we are trying to meet the needs of all our subscribers, we have made arrangements to provide the service of first class delivery to any subscriber who wishes it. We are hopeful that this will remedy most of the delays.

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For an entire year's subscription, the additional charge for mailing first class is \$24.00.

BOSTON CELTICS TEAM STATS

As of 12/4/90

Player	G	Min	Fg	Fga	Fg%	Ft	Fta	Ft%	3Fg	3Fga	Orb	Reb	Ass	St	To	Blk	Pf	Pts	Ppg
Bird	15	580	128	268	.478	44	50	.880	5	10	18	145	107	23	51	18	24	305	20.3
McHale	15	463	122	206	.595	49	64	.766	2	9	36	110	38	5	29	33	43	295	19.7
Lewis	15	558	121	225	.538	43	51	.843	0	3	18	84	42	16	32	17	46	285	19.0
Parish	15	426	81	148	.547	47	60	.783	0	0	50	145	7	10	35	24	51	209	13.9
Shaw	15	540	82	176	.466	45	53	.849	0	3	27	82	111	25	43	6	36	209	13.9
Gamble	15	418	73	130	.562	36	44	.818	0	1	12	41	42	11	22	2	34	182	12.1
Brown	15	271	36	71	.507	8	9	.889	0	1	6	21	60	8	22	3	32	60	5.3
M. Smith	10	65	15	34	.441	4	6	.667	0	3	5	10	6	1	7	2	3	34	3.4
Pinckney	8	76	10	22	.455	3	4	.750	0	0	7	17	9	4	8	2	11	23	2.9
Kleine	13	167	14	39	.359	4	8	.500	0	0	12	46	4	4	10	3	21	32	2.5
Popson	6	15	5	9	.556	4	4	1.000	0	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	4	14	2.3
Vrankovic	5	23	2	5	.400	3	5	.600	0	0	2	6	1	0	4	5	10	7	1.4



NBA Notebook

Jackson's Out — Versace's On The Hot Seat

By Andy Roth

The following article reflects the opinion of an independent writer who writes for several publications and are in no way the views of the *Boston Celtics* or *Celtics Pride*.

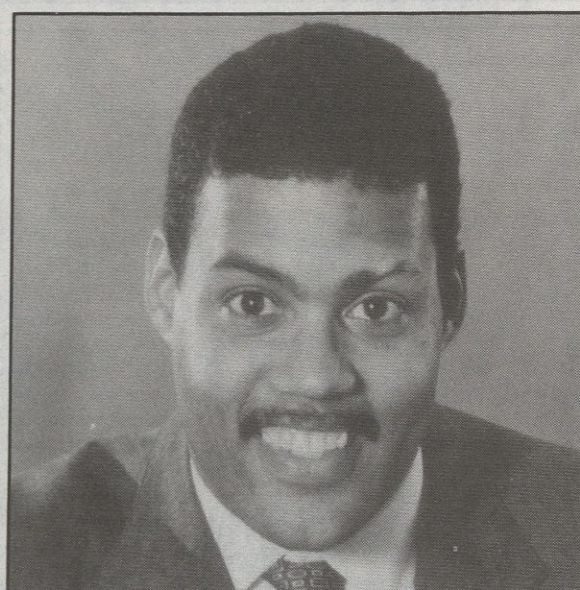
It's only the first full month of the NBA season, yet one coach has already been fired and another one has his head on the chopping block. But I have to wonder if the wrong heads are being chopped. Two days after the Knicks ended a 5 game losing streak, Stu Jackson got the boot. He can probably sue General Manager Al Bianchi for non-support. Since Jackson took over the head coaching duties from Rick Pitino prior to the 1989-90 season, GM Al Bianchi sure to ruin this team, makes the following moves to improve the Knicks: 1) Traded a young and talented point guard (Rod Strickland) for an aging point guard (Maurice Cheeks). 2) Traded a second round draft pick to Charlotte for back-up center Stuart Gray. In the weeks prior to the deal, Al Bianchi said the Knicks were a big body away from being title contenders. Unfortunately the big body the Knicks got is now a permanent fixture on the bench. 3) Let restricted free agent Johnny Newman go to Charlotte for nothing. I say Stu should have stayed and Al Bianchi should have been let go. Jackson's successor, former Suns and Mavericks coach John McCleod, won't fare any better unless more talented players are brought in.

In Indiana, Dick Versace is feeling the heat with the Pacers off to a 5-10 start. I ask you, is it Versace's fault that G.M. Donnie Walsh selected George McCleod as the 7th overall pick in the 1989 Draft and has been a complete bust? Is Versace

to blame for Walsh picking Rick Smits over Rony Seikaly in 1988? I rest my case. Smits by the way, continues to regress each season. The numbers are pitiful so far: 10 ppg, 4.8 rpg, and 42% shooting. And foul problems continue to haunt him. Smits can't stay on the floor for long enough stretches to make any impact. Slow footwork is the problem, and it's one that won't go away...

ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT: It's a term that strikes fear into the hearts of every player and team. It's the ligament in the knee that many star players have torn in recent years, including Johnny Dawkins and Roy Tarpley this season. Now, it looks like the Cavs Mark Price suffered the same injury, which would put him out for the season. Price hurt the knee when he banged into the scorer's table trying to save the ball from going out of bounds. It's unfortunate that his typical hustle proved to be so costly...

KENNY THE JET FUELS THE ROCKETS: Coach Don Chaney is thrilled with the point-guard play of Kenny Smith, who was acquired from the Hawks in the off-season. "What I like about Kenny is I don't have to call a play everytime," Chaney said. "His hand is in the game. He's like a coach on the floor." Smith himself, had positive vibes right from the start about playing with the Rockets. "I knew something good was going to happen. I was really looking forward to coming here," he said. "This is the best team I've ever been on. I'm doing the same things I've always done, it's just



Knicks head coach Stu Jackson was replaced despite winning his last game as head coach.

easier to do it here."

After two-plus seasons with the Sacrificial Kings and a short stay with the Selfish Hawks, Smith is finally having fun playing the game. "No question about it," he said. "Like the commercial says, 'The NBA is FAN-tastic.'"

Nets rookie Derrick Coleman is quickly showing why he was the first overall pick in last June's NBA Draft. Coleman is averaging 16.4 points and 10.8 rebounds per game, despite missing all of the preseason due to a contract holdout. The former Syracuse star gave veterans Charles Barkley and Rick Mahorn a lesson when he scored 28 points and pulled down an NBA season-high 23 rebounds in a win over the Sixers. The accolades are already coming

in. "He is the truth," said Stu Jackson. "He is going to be unbelievable," raved Piston assistant Brendan Malone. "He does it all, blocks shots, rebounds, he's outstanding." It's very early in the season, but Coleman looks like a lock for Rookie of the Year honors. He, along with Reggie Theus (18.8 ppg), are the two big reasons why the Nets are no longer pushovers. New Jersey's 6 wins is more than one-third of last season's total (17)...

Ledell Eackles finally returned to the Bullets lineup, but something was missing; the L on his uniform. Maybe it stands for Lose, as in "Lose Some Weight." Eackles has had problems with an expanding waistline since his college days at New Orleans...

HOT-HOT-HOT: Michael Jordan, Chris Mullin, and Danny Ainge have been just that since day one of the season. Ainge is hitting on 58% of his shots, an amazing start considering most of his shots are medium to long range. Even more incredible is his 3-point accuracy of 57%. Ainge's presence in Portland and the Blazers' 12-1 start is no coincidence.

Chris Mullin, meanwhile, is on his way to topping last year's All-Star season. Mullin is shooting 57% from the floor, including a perfect night against the Heat (11-11 FGs, 5-5 FTs). As usual, Mullin's game is not just scoring only. He rebounds very well for a small forward (5.5 pg), and is an outstanding passer (4.2 pg).

Michael Jordan is shooting less and scoring less this season, but is making the most of his shots (57%). Air had a recent three game stretch where he hit 75% from the floor. Jordan averaged 23 shots per game last season, only 20 so far this year. Why do I have the feeling that by playoff time, his field goal attempts will be up to normal standards.

1990-91 Boston Celtics Schedule

December — 1990

Sat. 1	—	A	Philadelphia	7:30
Mon. 3	—	H	Seattle	7:30
Wed. 5	—	H	Denver	7:30
Fri. 7	—	A	Dallas	7:00
Sat. 8	—	A	San Antonio	7:30
Mon. 10	—	A	Houston	7:30
Wed. 12	—	H	Milwaukee	7:30
Fri. 14	—	H	Detroit	8:00
Sat. 15	—	A	Miami	7:30
Wed. 19	—	H	Philadelphia	7:30
Thu. 20	—	A	Charlotte	7:30
Wed. 26	—	H	Indiana	7:30
Fri. 28	—	A	Atlanta	8:00

January — 1991

Wed. 2	—	H	New York	8:00
Fri. 4	—	H	Phoenix	7:30
Sun. 6	—	H	Dallas	7:30
Tue. 8	—	A	New York	7:30
Wed. 9	—	H	Milwaukee	7:30
Fri. 11	—	H	LA Clippers	7:30
Sat. 12	—	A	Washington	7:30
Wed. 16	—	H	Golden State	7:30
Fri. 18	—	H	New Jersey	7:30

Mon. 21	—	A	Detroit	7:30
Wed. 23	—	H	Detroit	8:00
Fri. 25	—	A	Philadelphia	7:30
Sun. 27	—	H	LA Lakers	12:30
Mon. 28	—	A	Minnesota	7:00
Wed. 30	—	H	Orlando	7:30

February — 1991

Fri. 1	—	A	Charlotte	7:30
Sun. 3	—	H	Washington	1:00
Wed. 6	—	H	Charlotte	7:30
Thu. 7	—	A	New York	7:30
Tue. 12	—	A	Seattle	7:00
Thu. 14	—	A	Golden State	7:30
Fri. 15	—	A	LA Lakers	7:30
Sun. 17	—	A	Denver	2:00
Tue. 19	—	A	Phoenix	6:00
Fri. 22	—	*	New Jersey	7:30
Sun. 24	—	A	Indiana	1:00
Tue. 26	—	A	Chicago	7:30
Wed. 27	—	H	Minnesota	7:30

March — 1991

Fri. 1	—	H	San Antonio	8:00
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Sun. 3	—	H	Portland	TBA
Mon. 4	—	*	Indiana	7:30
Wed. 6	—	H	Miami	7:30
Fri. 8	—	A	LA Clippers	7:30
Sun. 10	—	A	Portland	7:00
Tue. 12	—	A	Sacramento	7:30
Wed. 13	—	A	Utah	7:00
Fri. 15	—	A	Washington	8:00
Sun. 17	—	H	Philadelphia	12:00
Tue. 19	—	A	Atlanta	8:00
Wed. 20	—	H	Washington	7:30
Fri. 22	—	A	Indiana	7:30
Thu. 28	—	A	Miami	7:30
Fri. 29	—	H	Cleveland	8:00
Sun. 31	—	H	Chicago	12:30

April — 1991

Tue. 2	—	A	New Jersey	7:30
Thu. 4	—	H	New Jersey	7:30
Sat. 6	—	A	Orlando	7:30
Thu. 11	—	A	Milwaukee	7:30
Fri. 12	—	H	Miami	7:30
Sun. 14	—	H	New York	1:00
Tue. 16	—	A	Detroit	7:30
Thu. 18	—	A	Philadelphia	7:30
Fri. 19	—	A	Cleveland	8:00
Sun. 21	—	H	Atlanta	1:00

* — An asterisk denotes a home game in Hartford, CT. All games on WEEI (590 AM) radio. All times are local times, and are all "PM."

CELTICS PRIDE

A Look At The Backcourt

Lewis, Shaw, Gamble and Brown Are Providing Excitement

By Bob Schron

It is almost impossible to be involved with the Celtics these days and not be optimistic. Through the end of November, they were 12-2, having won eight games in a row, their improvements could be measured almost on a daily basis and they're still nowhere near their full potential as a team.

To be sure, this bunch currently wearing the green is not the same "what you see now is what you get" contingent fans around here had gotten used to following. For the first time in many a year, there are new faces worth talking about, who bring with them long sought after qualities such as speed, athleticism and burgeoning abilities, and, thus, a plethora of tantalizing and exciting question marks.

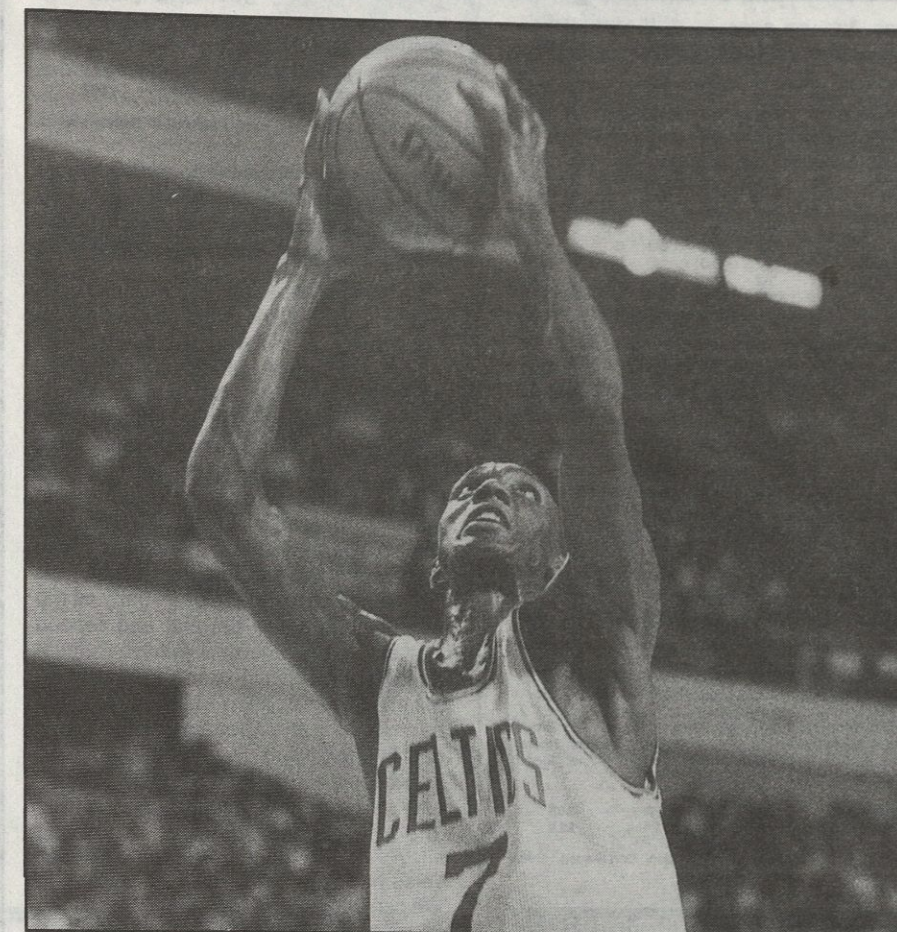
There are those who would argue that the present Celtics team has the best of all worlds. After all, they've still got their three most important contributors of the last decade plus — Robert Parish, Kevin McHale and, of course, Larry Bird — who've done a truly commendable job making up with guile much of what they've lost physically, and now they have four up and coming young players to add to the equation and help make for a very captivating product.

Although the uncertainties abound, it does seem relatively safe to say that at no previous time during the Bird-era has attention been diverted so greatly from the aforementioned big three, and this is despite the fact that — even at 37, 33 and 34, respectively — Parish can still be counted on game in and game out to confound opposing centers and post double figures in both points and rebounds, McHale to block shots and put two points up (either from the field or at the line) three out of every four times he makes up his mind to do so, and Bird to do whatever is most essential for a win on any given night. These days, however, the Celtics world is abuzz with talk and speculation about Reggie Lewis, Brian Shaw, Kevin Gamble and Dee Brown.

"It's really exciting right now how everything is really starting to come together for the four of us," opined Brown, following the team's easier than it sounds 118-101 victory in Hartford over the Miami Heat on November 26. "We have a real nice rotation going right now and we are each getting to know what the others like to do. Reg and Oscar (Gamble) can score almost anytime they want and Brian can move up to the 2-guard spot when I come in to play the point. We've got some real good combinations and we can go with a lot of different looks to keep defenses off balance."

Of course, most of us have known for two years now that Reggie was carrying a one-way ticket to the top of the NBA mountain, but its been the somewhat surprising emergences of the other three principal members in the Celtics' youth movement that have brightened the outlook of loyalists for the coming years and helped quell many of the anxieties that have steadily built as Bird, McHale and Parish have moved closer to the end of their roads.

"Reggie, Brian, Dee and Kevin all have youth on their side," observed Head Coach



Brown: "It's really exciting right now how everything is really starting to come together for the four of us."

Chris Ford. "I won't rate them against against other guard units in the league. I just know I'm pleased with their approach to the game and the job they've been doing so far, and I know they can only get better."

When Ford sat down in June after being handed the Celtics reins, he could not have been too pleased with the prospects for his backcourt. Lewis, who is really a small forward that's been converted into a shooting guard, was the lone player the new coach knew he could count on immediately to fit into the type of game he had in mind. Meanwhile, Dennis Johnson and Jim Paxson were simply no longer physically capable of contending with the younger players at their positions at either end of the court, clearly neither Charles Smith nor John Bagley were a big part of the solution, Brian Shaw was still somewhere between Boston and Rome, Gamble was young and athletic, but still unproven after two seasons in a Celtics uniform and apparently headed for some new locale on the NBA map, and the line on first round pick Dee Brown was that he was physically gifted but raw.

Of course, by now, most of us are pretty much sick of hearing about the fortuitous chain of events that have lead up to the present day, where Ford finds himself directing one of the most promising backcourts in the NBA, so I'll cut short the historical discourse here.

"I think if the four of us can stay together for a few more years, inevitably, we'll become one of the best backcourts in the league," predicts Shaw with his usual confidence. "We're all young and talented in some ways, and we have a chance to grow together as players, so the only thing

I think that can come from this situation is that we'll become more familiar and comfortable with each other while we improve individually."

"I think we're all playing pretty good basketball right now and you know we're only going to keep getting better," echoed Gamble. "We're young and we're still making too many mistakes, but I think that if we continue to work hard like we have and stay within ourselves, the rest will take care of itself."

Swinging back and forth between the off guard and his more natural small forward position, Lewis has continued in his ascent to the point where he should now be a serious candidate on the All-Star ballot. He is currently second on the team in scoring to only Larry, averaging right around 20 points per game, while shooting better than 55 percent from the field.

Meanwhile, Lewis' starting backcourt mate and best friend, Shaw, has returned to form faster than most people had projected. He is keeping defenses honest with better than 13 points per game, and, more importantly, earning their respect with close to 8 assists an outing.

The 22-year old Brown started out his rookie campaign appearing both tentative and nervous in the early going. Recently, though, he confessed that he had not been looking for his own offense enough, and swore at that point he would begin playing his game. Since then he has averaged better than nine points and four assists in right around 20 minutes per game. Already, however, there are few experts who dare disagree with the contention that Dee has all of the mental and physical attributes necessary to become much more

than just a good player at this level.

And last, but certainly not least, is Gamble, who must now be regarded as the most pleasant Celtic surprise in recent memory. Since he was inserted in to the starting line-up by Ford just six games into the regular season, everything seems to be going right for the Celtics, and it does not take a genius to draw the correlations to the team's new found success and Kevin's presence. In 27.6 minutes, he has thus far averaged 12.5 points on nearly 59 percent shooting, and 2.9 assists.

However, the numbers themselves only tell a small part of the story on all four of these guys. There is, unfortunately, no real way of measuring what they are each separately and collectively providing the Celtics with these days.

For starters, simply by virtue of their young, athletic legs, the four of them have been able to contribute the two things arguably that the entire team has most suffered from a lack of in recent times — a running game and a capable first line of prevention at the defensive end.

"Most importantly, I think, the four of them have been playing the good defense we'd hoped they would, not allowing the perimeter people on other teams to beat us off of the dribble," asserted Ford. "And then, on offense, they're each getting out into the open floor and getting the easy baskets that I've said all along we'd need to be successful this year."

"After having played together for just a couple of months, I'd have to say that things are coming together pretty well," said Lewis, attempting to explain the sentiments expressed by his coach. "We're in sync with each other I think, basically, because we like to play the same type of game. Also, it helps to have that experience up front with Larry, Kevin and Robert. Knowing that when things break down we can get the ball in anyone of their hands really helps our overall confidence."

It must be pointed out, however, that the relationship between the old timers and the new kids on the block is clearly a symbiotic one, as Robert, Kevin and especially Larry have each reaped the rewards of a new approach. For starters, the three of them are seldom being used on the floor at the same time anymore, which lets McHale see more time in the middle and Bird at the power forward slot, thereby allowing them to match up against players who do not have much of a speed advantage, while Lewis and Gamble have been logging the bulk of the small forward minutes. Perhaps even more beneficial, though, is all the easy baskets being scored in the running game when, often, they are not even required to get over half court. And, when they do get involved in the break, it is generally as the fourth man up, and lord knows how they prefer simple trailer baskets to their tedious half court tallies.

"I think the four of us could be adding another two or three years to their (Bird, McHale and Parish) careers," contested Brown. "Our young legs will help them in that they hopefully won't have to work as hard as they've had to in the past, and maybe the fact that they know we're going to be around for a while and we're going to improve will motivate them to stay around a little while longer themselves."

Gee, I hadn't even thought of that.



Game By Game

Celtics Maintain First-Place Lead

By Bob Schron

**BOSTON 108 HOUSTON 95
NOVEMBER 21
BOSTON GARDEN**

SUMMARY. Kevin McHale starred off the bench, scoring 32 points and rallying the Celtics from an early 9-0 deficit as Boston ran away from the Rockets, who had come off a critical win the night before, 115-88, over the Knicks in Madison Square Garden. In that game, Akeem Olatunji dominated New York's Patrick Ewing; in Boston, Olatunji personified what the quirks of NBA scheduling does. The Celtics' Robert Parish, off since Saturday, outplayed Akeem, scoring 18 points with 11 rebounds in 28 minutes. McHale and Larry Bird (18 pts-15 rebounds-8 assists) took over in a ten minute stretch overlapping the second and third periods; McHale scored 6 points in a 1:12 surge before the half, extending the lead to 58-49. Bird and Parish keyed an ensuing rally to drive the score to 79-56 with 4:30 left in the 3rd.

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Wood	22	0-6	2-2	1-6	2	2	2
Thorp	31	4-9	1-1	1-6	4	2	9
Olatunji	37	8-22	3-3	3-9	2	3	19
McIntyre	35	10-24	0-0	3-9	2	3	23
K. Smith	27	0-4	4-5	0-1	3	2	4
Felt	11	2-5	0-0	1-3	3	2	4
Floyd	21	8-15	4-4	3-1	3	4	8
Johnson	20	3-7	2-4	3-1	4	1	20
Winchester	19	1-10	2-2	1-1	0	1	4
L. Smith	17	1-1	0-0	2-2	0	2	2
TOTALS	240	37-103	18-21	18-38	20	21	95

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Bird	39	8-19	2-2	5-10	8	1	18
Gamble	23	2-6	3-4	0-5	4	0	7
Parish	28	5-14	8-10	4-7	0	4	18
Shaw	35	4-12	0-0	1-5	2	2	8
Lewis	40	6-16	3-3	3-5	1	4	15
McHale	35	13-19	5-5	1-9	7	2	32
Kleine	20	1-4	0-0	1-6	2	2	2
Brown	13	0-3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	6	2-4	0-0	0-0	0	0	3
Popson	1	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
TOTALS	240	43-99	21-34	18-48	32	18	108

FG% .434, FT% .875; Three-pt goals: 1-5. Team rebounds: 7. Blocked: 5 (McHale 3, Bird, Parish). Technical fouls: Illegal defense, 11:01 first; Illegal defense, 6:40 first.

A-14,890; T-1:56; Officials-Tommy Nunez, Paul Mihalik, Pete Quinn.

**BOSTON 115 SACRAMENTO 105
NOVEMBER 23
BOSTON GARDEN**

SUMMARY. Celtic rookie Dee Brown's explosiveness highlighted an aggressive defense and running attack as Boston stopped the Kings, 115-105. Brown's play sparked the Celtics in the second quarter, as the C's rallied from a 27-24 1st Q deficit to lead at half-time, 53-47. The Celtics then ran away from the Kings in the 3rd Q, outscoring Sacramento 38-21 in the frame. A pressing unit by Sacramento, led by Travis Mays (24 pts) and Antoine Carr (18 pt-11 rebounds) brought the Kings within 108-100 with 1:29 left in the game, but the C's pulled away. Kevin McHale (21) and Brian Shaw (20) paced six players in double figures.

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Simmons	36	6-16	6-9	4-7	1	4	19
Tisdale	30	11-22	6-6	2-7	1	0	28
Winnington	22	1-3	0-0	3-5	0	2	3
Mays	38	7-19	9-10	1-4	4	4	24
Sparrow	21	5-8	0-0	0-3	6	2	10
Carr	37	6-15	6-6	3-11	3	5	18
Cotter	28	0-2	0-0	0-2	7	1	0
Sampson	5	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Calloway	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Clauswell	10	1-1	0-0	1-3	0	2	2
Lackner	11	1-2	0-0	1-2	1	1	2
TOTALS	240	38-99	27-31	15-45	23	22	105

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Bird	28	3-8	3-4	1-5	1	6	9
Gamble	30	5-10	2-2	1-5	1	6	12
Parish	22	4-7	2-2	1-7	1	3	10
Shaw	34	8-11	4-4	2-5	9	1	20
Lewis	32	7-13	4-5	1-4	3	2	18
McHale	32	9-16	3-4	4-4	4	2	21
Kleine	19	1-2	2-2	1-5	0	1	4
Brown	26	6-11	2-2	0-1	8	2	14
Smith	12	3-7	0-0	2-3	0	0	6
Vrankovic	5	0-2	1-2	1-1	1	0	1
TOTALS	240	46-87	23-27	13-48	32	20	115

FG% .529, FT% .852; Three-pt goals: 0-4. (Lewis 0-1, Brown 0-1, McHale 0-2). Team rebounds: 2. Blocked: 9 (Lewis 2, McHale 2, Brown 2, Vrankovic 2, Smith, Vrankovic). Steals: 9 (Bird 2, Shaw 2, Brown 2, Lewis, McHale, Kleine). Illegal defense: 1.

A-19,081; T-2:03; Officials-Jack Madden, Don Vaden, Mark Wunderlich.

**BOSTON 113 CLEVELAND 102
NOVEMBER 24
RICHFIELD COLISEUM**

SUMMARY. Reggie Lewis connected on 7-of-8 from the floor, leading Boston in an early 14-point advantage (34-20), and Larry Bird paced the Celtics' scoring with 29, adding 10 assists as the Celtics downed Cleveland on the road, the second straight win in Richfield after the franchise had previously dropped eight in a row there. Boston's transition game was led by Brian Shaw (12 assists) and the running and rebounding of Robert Parish (20 pts-14 rebs-4 blocked shots). Bird's initial 3-pt FG of the year pushed the C's lead to 97-80 in the 4th quarter, enough to withstand a late rally paced by Brad Daugherty (31).

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Gamble	22	4-6	2-2	2-3	2	2	10
Bird	44	14-28	0-0	0-10	3	2	29
Parish	35	8-10	4-6	6-14	0	4	20
Lewis	42	11-20	6-6	1-7	3	3	28
Shaw	40	3-10	2-2	1-6	12	0	8
McHale	31	4-11	2-2	4-5	1	2	10
D. Brown	16	3-7	0-0	3-3	4	3	6
Kleine	10	1-1	0-0	0-3	0	0	2
TOTALS	240	48-98	18-18	17-31	32	17	113

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
C. Brown	17	2-5	0-0	1-4	1	0	4
Nance	39	9-20	0-0	3-7	6	3	18
Daugherty	45	13-23	5-6	3-11	4	3	31
Pridie	16	3-7	0-0	0-0	0	2	6
Price	38	7-14	0-0	0-1	11	0	15
Ehlo	32	4-8	0-1	2-4	5	1	8
Ferry	26	5-14	2-3	0-1	3	1	13
Morton	20	2-3	9-9	1-1	6	2	5
Kerr	7	1-1	0-0	0-0	1	2	2
TOTALS	240	48-98	18-18	17-31	32	17	113

FG% .484, FT% .700. Three-pt goals: 3-9. 333 (Simmons 1, Ferry 1-3, Price 1-4, Ehlo 0-1). Team Rebounds: 7. Blocked shots: 3 (Nance 2, Ehlo). Turnovers: 10 (Price 3, Ehlo 2, Nance, C. Brown, Pridie).

Paddio, Ferry, team). Steals: 6 (Price 4, Ehlo, Morton). Technical Fouls: None. Illegal defense: None.

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Boston	34	26	28	25	-	113	
Cleveland	20	26	32	24	-	102	

A-19,748; T-1:49; Officials-Jake O'Donnell, Ed Middleton, Woody Mayfield.

**ATLANTA AT BOSTON/POSTPONED
NOVEMBER 28
BOSTON GARDEN**

Because of unseasonably warm weather in late November, the temperature a record 73 degrees, condensation kept forming on the Boston Garden basketball floor, creating conditions which forced players to keep losing their footing. The Celtics, behind a pressing and running game, had surged to a 37-22 advantage with 10:30 remaining in the second quarter before the game was halted by referee Dick Bavetta. The Hawks, who had warmed up at the back end of the court where the problem was worst, had complained about the floor as early as the warmups. Between the first and second quarters, after Dominique Wilkins, Rumeal Robinson and Duane Ferrell had all slipped, resin had been applied to the surface but the conditions remained treacherous. "We tried utilizing a fan system for the floor," Bavetta said afterward, "but even after we resumed (after a thirty minute delay at the 10:30 mark), players continued to slip and fall. We had to call it." Atlanta coach Bob Weiss had gone to Bavetta and told him, "We can't continue to 1/2 play," someone will get hurt." Bavetta tried to rectify it, but to no avail. It was a decision Chris Ford agreed with. "We never want to see a player injured," the Celtic coach added.

The game is rescheduled, to December 23 at 1pm. The game will be picked up at this juncture, with the C's ahead by fifteen points.

Ticket policy included: Season ticket holders will receive replacement tickets through the mail, so they'll have to do nothing. Individuals who purchased tickets at the box office will have to exchange their ticket stubs for replacement tickets at the Boston Garden Box Office, 11:00am - 7:00pm Mon-Sat; 1:00pm - 7:00pm Sunday.

**BOSTON 118 MIAMI 101
NOVEMBER 26
HARTFORD CIVIC CENTER**

SUMMARY. The Celtics up-tempo style offense, and their pesky defense limited the Heat to a 38% field-goal percentage for the game. In a span of 3:30 of the first quarter, the Celtics had a 16-6 lead and each of their five starters had at least two points. Miami stepped up its full-court pressure in the second quarter, and they ran off 10 straight points to trail 58-53 at the half.

Boston put the game away in the third quarter, going on runs of 6-0, 6-0, 16-9. When the third quarter was done, so were the Heat; Boston led, 92-77.

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Wagner	12	2-6	4-4	0-0	0	1	8
Rice	37	6-14	0-0	1-6	1	4	13
Seikaly	41	7-20	7-8	3-17	1	3	21
Douglas	26	2-7	5-6	0-0	6	0	9
Edwards	30	5-13	4-4	0-0	6	0	9
Coles	22	4-8	1-2	0-0	3	2	10

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Bird	36	10-18	1-3	1-14	11	2	21
Gamble	35	9-12	2-2	0-0	5	2	20
Parish	22	5-10	4-4	1-6	0	4	14
Shaw	29	6-10	2-3	3-5	8	4	14
Lewis	35	6-11	1-2	4-10	3	4	13
McHale	26	9-12	2-4	3-5	1	4	20
Brown	24	3-6	1-2	0-1	3	1	7
Kleine	12	1-2	1-2	3-5	1	3	3
M. Smith	10	2-4	0-0	1-1	1	1	3
Pickney	5	0-2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Vrankovic	4	0-1	2-2	0-0	0	0	2
Popson	2	0-1	0-0	1-2	1	1	0
TOTALS	240	51-91	16-24	17-31	38	25	118

FG% .560; FT% .667; Three-pt goals: 0-0. .000. Team Rebounds: 8. Blocked shots: 6 (Lewis 2, McHale 2, Bird, Parish). Turnovers: 18 (McHale 4, Bird 3, Brown 3, Gamble 2, Shaw 2, Klein 2, Smith, Pickney). Steals: 10 (Bird 2, Gamble 2, Lewis 2, McHale 2, Shaw, Brown). Technical fouls: Illegal defense, 2:50 first, illegal defense, 10:46 fourth. Illegal defense: 1.

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Boston	22	31	24	24	-	101	
Miami	33	28	34	26	-	118	

A-15,239; T-2:09; Officials-Ronnie Nunn, Greg Willard, Mike Callahan.

**BOSTON 123 WASHINGTON 105
NOVEMBER 30
BOSTON GARDEN**

SUMMARY. Larry Bird scored his 20,000th career point in leading the Celtics to a 123-105 win. Bird, who scored 21 in the game, reached the milestone at the 7:58 mark of the third period, this in the middle of a quick individual seven point surge, and assist to Brian Shaw to help keep the Celtics safely in front. The Celtics began the game sluggishly and Darrell Walker's play (12 pts-12 rebs for the night) had Washington up 22-18 after the quarter. But Kevin McHale (18 pts) replaced Reggie Lewis late in the 1st period and a 26-13 ten minute stretch provided a working margin for the rest of the night.

Bernard King, the league's leading scorer coming into the game at 30.9 ppg, though limited to three 1st half points, kept Washington in it until Celtics pulled away with another 18-9 stretch to open the fourth quarter, Boston leading 103-84 and beginning the bench-clearing process.

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
King	40	9-23	4-5	0-3	2	3	22
Grant	27	8-14	5-5	2-5	4	3	21
Jones	42	2-4	1-2	6-9	1	2	5
Workman	36	5-12	3-6	1-3	6	2	13
Walker	34	3-8	6-8	2-10	5	2	12
Eackles	22	3-8	1-2	0-0	3	2	7
Alarie	10	2-5	0-1	0-0	0	4	4
Ellison	4	0-3	1-4	1-1	0	1	0
Hammonds	14	2-4	0-0	1-2	1	0	4
Foster	7	0-2	2-2	0-0	2	0	2
English	4	2-3	0-0	0-0	0	0	4
TOTALS	240	36-87	23-38	13-29	28	37	95

FG% .414; FT% .657. Three-pt goals: 0-1 (Walker). Team rebounds: 8. Blocked shots: 6 (Jones 4, King, Ellison). Steals: 4 (King, Grant, Workman, Walker).

	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Bird	39	8-20	2-2	1-13	5	1	21
Gamble	31	6-12	4-4	1-1	2	2	16
Parish	25	1-6	8-8	5-10	0	2	10
Shaw	33	8-18	0-0	4-2	5	2	16
Lewis	29	4-12	2-2	0-4	2	4	10
D. Brown	25	8-9	2-2	1-3	3	4	18
McHale	27	6-13	2-2	2-5	3	3	18
Kleine	13	0-1	0-0	0-4	0	1	0
Smith	5	1-3	0-0	0-2	2	0	2
Pickney	5	1-2	0-0	1-2	0	1	2
Popson	4	4-4	2-2	1-1	0	1	10

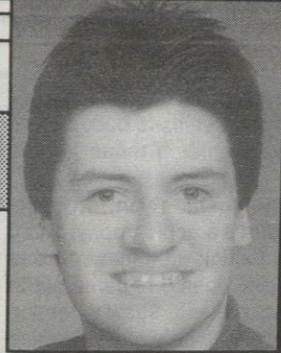
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts
Vrankovic	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	3	0
TOTALS	240	48-100	22-32	18-44	27	24	123

FG% .480; FT% .500. Three-pt goals: 3-4. 500. Team rebounds: 6. Blocked shots: 10 (Bird 3, Parish 2, Smith 2, Shaw, Lewis, McHale). Steals: 10 (Bird 3, Gamble 2, Shaw 2, Brown 2, Lewis 1, Klein 1).

A-14,890; T-1:56; Officials-Jake O'Donnell, Ed Middleton, Jim Capers.

**PHILADELPHIA 116 BOSTON 110
DECEMBER 1
THE SPECTRUM**

SUMMARY. Charles Barkley scored 37 points with 13 rebounds as the 76ers outlasted the Celtics in a battle between the 1st place C's and 2nd place Philadelphia in the Atlantic Division. The Celtics had rallied from a 29-28 and 58-48 1st quarter and half-time deficits to tie the game early in the 3rd quarter on a 10-0 surge behind Reggie Lewis (18 pts) and Larry Bird (15 pts-11 rebounds-9 assists). There were three lead changes in the third quarter, as Kevin McHale (*29 pts to lead the C's; 15 in the quarter) kept the Celtics in it, trailing 87-83 after three. But down the stretch, Barkley took over, keying a late 8-2 surge with a pair of powerful twisting baseline drives and a thunderous dunk. Philadelphia 104-98 at that 3:36 juncture and a jumper by Ron Anderson and free throws by Ricky Green sealed the verdict.



By Mike Spellman

Double Dribbles

Bird Is Key To The Success Of Running Game

It would seem pretty safe to assume that just about anyone who expressed doubts about Larry Bird's ability to fit into an up-tempo scheme must be feeling pretty silly right about now.

Although his scoring through the end of November (20.7) was off a few points from his career average (24.9), even the most indifferent of basketball observers can clearly see that the not so fleet a foot 34-year old (as of December 7) has to date been the key to the Celtics' success in the running game. In fact, there could be a pretty good case made for the argument that at no previous time in his career has Bird meant as much to the C's as he does right now.

With the steady and collective slowing down of his longtime running mates McHale, Parish and DJ over the last few seasons, Bird's long feared passing skill had gradually become less and less of a weapon in the Celtics arsenal. The relentless progression of age, coupled with the absence of adequate relief troops, made the halfcourt stand-around offense not just simply a survival. Subsequently, many once powerful attributes fell by the wayside, perhaps the most vital of which being the room previously given to Bird to create.

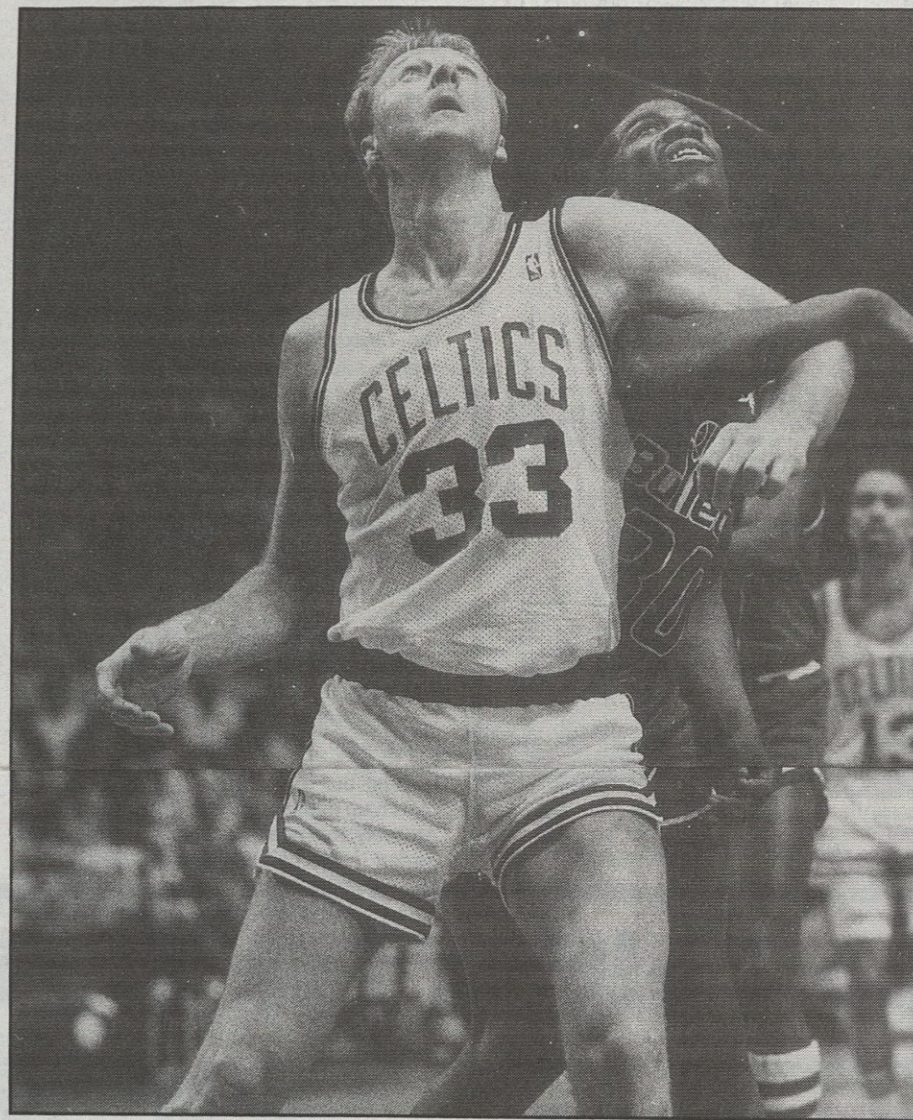
However, with the infusion of youth and speed this year, like the mythical phoenix, the old Bird has risen from the ashes and once again spread his wings, and like the creature of prey once more he is exploiting every lapse in attention or errant step of his enemies.

Those who doubted Bird's ability to contribute in the open court, for whatever reason, simply did not take into account the cerebral artistry that has made Bird such a unique and great player over the years. And, as any true artist will tell you, there is no better canvas on which to create than one that is wide open and free from the inherent limitations of convention.

In a word, Bird's work of late in the quick hit offense—whether he is pulling down a defensive rebound and releasing one of his telepathic outlets or hitting the one player the opposition's transition defense has not yet found or breaking down the first wave of defense and finding the mate his second defender just fell off of—has been masterful.

Let us not forget to give Chris Ford his due as well, though. Not only has the first year head coach seen to it that his superstar is generally flanked by guys who thrive in a running game, but he has regularly assigned him to guard the opposition's center or most ardent rebounder. This strategy has enabled Bird to stay close to the glass and simply own the defensive boards for stretches this year. And, as we all know, every rebound he now gets quickly becomes a high percentage scoring opportunity for his team.

Try as they may, no strategy deployed by an opponent yet this year has proved successful at preventing Bird from continuously providing his team a numbers advantage at the other end with his wondrous and endless array of outlet passes.



Bird's work of late has been masterful.

Whether he's double or even triple teamed after pulling down the board, whether they go to a man-to-man or a well devised trap, whether they fall off him altogether or just scurry back down court as fast as they can, it hasn't made a difference. Time and time again the ball has wound up in the right players hands and a slam dunk or an easy lay-in have been the result.

It is certainly no coincidence that for as long as the NBA has been around the teams that have enjoyed the most success have been those with the more diversified offenses. One case in point—Despite the unparalleled greatness of Michael Jordan and a whole slew of physically gifted running mates for him, the Chicago Bulls have not been able to get over that final hurdle, while the Detroit Pistons, without a single 20 point per game scorer, have captured back-to-back championships.

For whatever it's worth, the Celtics are presently one of just six teams in the NBA who have at least six players on their team averaging double figures in points. Throwing out the freakshow-ready Denver Nuggets (2-11), who are running away with the competitions for both offensive output and defensive allotment, 130.1 and 144.7 respectively, the five teams with six or

more players averaging better than 10 points per game are Boston (11-2), Detroit (11-2), the Los Angeles Lakers (7-5), Phoenix (7-4) and Portland (11-1).

Moreover, the Celtics' sixth leading scorer, Kevin Gamble (12.5 ppg), is lapping all but one of his four counterparts, Portland's Buck Williams (12.6). The other sixth place scorers are Detroit's Vinny Johnson (10.7 ppg), the Lakers' A.C. Green (10.1 ppg) and Phoenix' Dan Majerle (10.3 ppg). For the record, Portland actually has seven players over the two figure mark with former Connecticut standout Cliff Robinson currently netting 11.8.

The Celtics have been worrying a lot of local loyalists with their apparent lack of a "killer instinct" (i.e. — letting teams back into games once they've had them on the ropes).

However, in comparison, it seems very little has been made of the newly rediscovered ability of this team to pull out the close games.

In both of their losses to date, the Boston contingent played like a junior varsity team and were subsequently pounded by good teams. No big deal, right? Nothing more than a breakdown or a letdown, both of which are more frequent in the early part

of the season, anyway.

Forgetting for a minute the four or five games they've almost thrown away, consider that in six of their 11 wins to date the game was in question down the stretch and each time the Celtics prevailed, thanks to staunch defense and superior ball control.

I believe it was hoop guru Bob Ryan (of *The Boston Globe*), among others I can not remember, who pointed out one time not too long ago that the most precise way of discerning a great team from a good team is not gauged by that team's ability to blow an opponent out but rather the ability to consistently win the close games.

Arguments to the contrary?

At least a half dozen or so times a season over the last several years, while watching Celtics telecasts, I'd turn the sound down all the way on the telly just so I could listen to Johnny Most describe the action from "high above courtside." Naturally, this often gave rise to the question as to whether or not the esteemed announcer and I were watching the same game, but that of course was half the charm.

A few times already this season, I have found myself away from a TV set when the Celtics are playing and, being a loyal fan, I've been forced to follow along on audio. Not surprisingly, especially at first, I found myself yearning for the raspy voiced, partisan histrionics of Mr. Most, but I must admit that as I got into the game the melancholia faded and I found myself actually listening to the game.

by Johnny's longtime broadcast partner Glen Ordway and the commentary being provided by Johnny's replacement Doug Brown.

The repartee between Ordway and Brown seems to flow quite easily, as does their description of the on-court action. Though somewhat more objective than his long-time partner and friend, Ordway becomes emotionally charged at most of the right times and no one will ever have to guess which club he's pulling for. Brown knows basketball, but like Ordway, who realized his role when Johnny was the man at the number 1 mike, he also knows when to sit back and just listen.

It was nice to hear that former UCal-Santa Barbara stars and Celtics cuts Eric McArthur and Carrick DeHart had landed on their feet in the CBA.

McArthur, a 6'6 defensive and rebounding specialist, who at one time appeared to have a roster spot the C's all but sewn up, has been picked up by Grand Rapids. DeHart, a 6'4 swing guard, will be playing in Yakima.

With some hard work and a little seasoning, it does not seem too difficult to imagine both players eventually making it back to the NBA. In McArthur's case it could be only a matter of his confidence and mental approach to the game catching up with his immense physical skills.

For whatever it's worth, through the end of November, Danny Ainge was averaging 21.8 minutes and 14.3 points per contest on nearly 60 percent shooting from the field for the Portland Trailblazers, while Brad Lohaus, of the Milwaukee Bucks, was playing 15.3 minutes and hitting 5.3 points a game.

Mike Spellman is a correspondent for the Brockton Enterprise in Brockton, Massachusetts.

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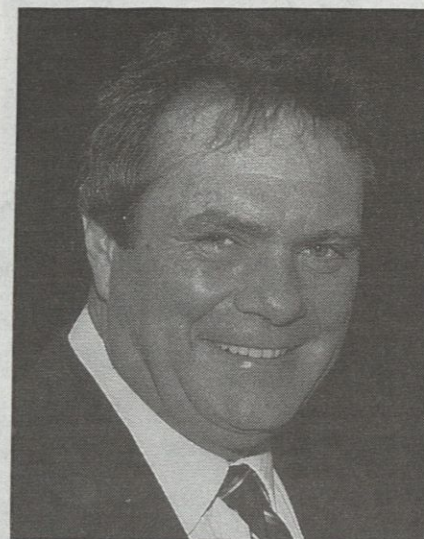


Confidential

Heinsohn Has His Say

By Bob Schron

Heinsohn's View. Tom Heinsohn, Celtics' color commentator on SportsChannel with Mike Gorman, and, on WXNE, the play-by-play announcer with Bob Cousy, always an advocate of the uptempo game, not surprisingly was enthusiastic both about the Celtics' white-hot (11-2) start and about their way of doing it. "The team's quickness up front has been the key to their running game," Heinsohn commented in an interview last week. "When Chris Ford went to Kevin Gamble as his 'third guard' type of player in the starting lineup, he was doing a number of things. First, the quickness at the start, which has allowed the team to get off to good starts. Between Kevin Gamble and Reggie Lewis, Chris has two players who are interchangeable. Secondly, he now has the option of doing different things with Kevin McHale, who's played extremely well. There was a lot of anxiety about the Celtics perhaps being too slow when McHale, Larry Bird and Robert Parish were on the floor together. But Chris uses Kevin McHale as a backup center, too, so he's not getting caught with the three together — unless he wants to. The Celtics are dictating the matchups, in other words." Heinsohn thinks that the team shouldn't be concerned about having only an eight man rotation (the above players and starting point guard Brian Shaw backup point Dee Brown and backup center Joe Kleine) because, "expansion has watered teams down, and more teams will be running, attempting to camouflage their



Heinsohn: "The Celtics are very close to being an outstanding team in this league."

problems with speed." Heinsohn's best bet for the ninth man: Michael Smith. "His offense is good, and he can run. Ed Pinckney apparently hasn't done it to the satisfaction of the coaches."

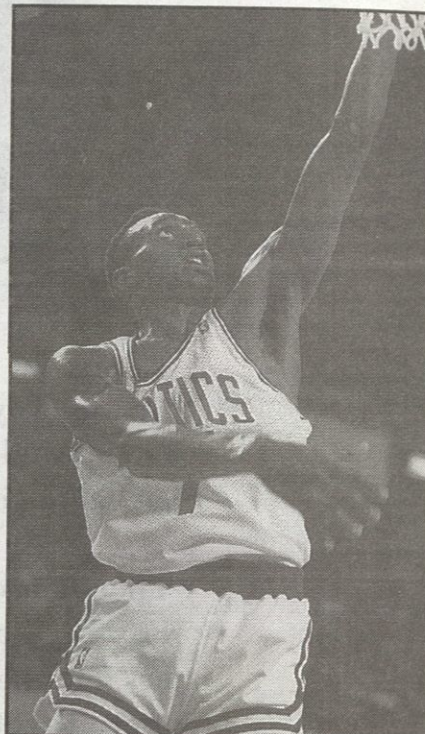
Heinsohn pointed out that with the quick starting lineup, Bird has thrived as a power forward, and he thinks that the Celtics' matchups will cause arch-rival Philadelphia considerable problems. "I think Charles Barkley will have a difficult time with Lewis and Rick Mahorn will have to be constantly on his guard against Bird's passing at the four spot."

"The Celtics are close to being an out-

standing team in this league. The best teams in the league have outstanding impact players — Dennis Rodman in Detroit and Jerome Kersey in Portland. But in my view, Boston has players with similar effectiveness. Only the Celtic players are interchangeable, and they're built differently."

Why is Dave Gavitt already an important influence already on this team? First, he's not hung up on being very demonstrative, especially now, with the team doing so well. Others coming into a power position as he has might be intent on grabbing the spotlight. Secondly, he's established sound communication channels with the whole club — 1 through 12. After the C's clubbed Houston last week, Gavitt made a point of going over to Ed Pinckney, who, though feeling happy about the team's win, had his head hung low, his minutes sparse. Gavitt placed his hand under Pinckney's chin, and lifted it up, an actual "keep your head up" message, as the media hordes surrounded the heroes of the moment, locker neighbor Reggie Lewis, and Brian Shaw...Shaw on the contribution of Joe Kleine: "Joe's playing very good defense, making contributions you don't see easily. He's always helping out on the defensive end, and his positioning on rebounds is important. I know I have clear lanes to go in and get the ball off the boards because Joe has blocked his man off."...Pinckney on extensive sitting time: "It's made easier because we're winning. But I'm a player, and it still won't be completely right until I'm able to contribute more on the floor."...Chris Ford on the improvement in Dee Brown's outside shot: "I always thought he would be able to shoot well up here (in the NBA). What's happened is that we're playing well offensively and he's taking his shot in the rhythm of the offense. Playing well as a team takes pressure off of a rookie." Boston Garden President Larry Moulter explained that the Boston Garden floor was resistant to efforts to dry because of construction in the North Station area. Talking about the November 28th cancellation between the Celtics and the Hawks, Moulter commented, "Because of the construction for a new MBTA line, we were unable to open up doors which would have provided a way of cooling off the building earlier in the day. Ventilation here has always been a problem...There isn't a day that goes by when I wasn't wishing we had a solution (to all of the problems of the antiquated Garden)."...Bob Ryan with Ted Sarandis on the Celtics Pride Hotline: "I think we're all pleasantly surprised with the play of Kevin Gamble. He's always been a big-time driver — what we'll have to know more about in the long term is if he's able to knock down his outside shot consistently."...Evidence that Larry Bird is enthused about the game this season: His ever-persistent good-natured, sometimes half-joking, needle is out in the team's locker room...Winning has contributed to a more overtly talkative climate in the locker room pre-game, the most since 1987...Tom Heinsohn, while acknowledging the Lakers have made a resurgence since elevating Sam Perkins to a starting role and bringing A.C. Green off of the bench, thought the Lakers still made

an error in allowing Pat Riley to leave. "It was a big mistake," Heinsohn said last week. "Riley may have stayed but he didn't get the backing of management in key decisions. (The backing) was needed, but it wasn't there."...K.C. Jones on the young Seattle Supersonics: "There's talent here. But what we need to get better is more of a team attitude. The idea that I'm on the floor to help (my teammate) get the job done, to win."...Brian Shaw on Dee Brown: "He's got all of the tools offensively. I think that's obvious. But where he really makes a difference, coming off the bench, is his intensity. He comes off the bench playing hard and I have to think that his attitude is an important reason why we got him." Brendon Malone, Pistons' assistant coach,



Dee Brown has all the tools according to backcourt mate Shaw.

on the champion Pistons' recent ten-game winning streak: "I think a major reason for our success has been the more consistent play of John Salley off the bench. And as a team, we've really been getting the job done rebounding, and on the defensive end." Malone pointed out the team was intent on following the example set by the San Francisco 49ers, who have won two straight NFL titles and won ten straight games to open the season: "They're successful for three reasons. They play through minor injuries. They have internal (players') leadership, and they work, pay the price in the off-season. I think we're trying to do the same thing."...Scout Rick Weltzman of the C's selected the following among players he would rank as probable All-Americans: Larry Johnson and Stacey Augmon, UNLV; Doug Smith, Missouri; Kenny Anderson, Georgia Tech; Alonzo Mourning, Georgetown; Christian Laettner, Duke; Steve Smith, Michigan State; Peter Crotty, Virginia; Luc Longley, New Mexico; Dikembe Mutombo, Georgetown; Kevin Lynch, Minnesota; Mark Macon, Temple; Chris Corlanni and Rodney Monroe, North Carolina State.

1990-91 Boston Celtics Roster

NO.	NAME	POS	HGT	WGT	BIRTHDATE	COLLEGE	YEARS PRO
5	John Bagley *	G	6-0	192	4/23/60	B.C.	8
33	Larry Bird	F	6-9	220	12/7/56	Indiana State	11
7	Dee Brown	G	6-1	161	11/29/68	Jacksonville	R-1 (19)
34	Kevin Gamble	G-F	6-5	210	11/13/65	Iowa	3
53	Joe Kleine	C	7-0	271	1/4/62	Arkansas	5
35	Reggie Lewis	G-F	6-7	195	11/21/65	Northeastern	3
32	Kevin McHale	F-C	6-10	225	12/19/57	Minnesota	10
00	Robert Parish	C	7-1/2	230	8/30/53	Centenary	14
54	Ed Pinckney	F	6-9	215	3/27/63	Villanova	5
42	Dave Popson	F	6-10	230	5/17/64	North Carolina	1
20	Brian Shaw	G	6-6	190	3/22/66	UCSB	1
11	Michael Smith	F	6-10	225	5/19/65	BYU	1
52	Stojko Vrankovic	C	7-2	260	1/22/64	(Yugoslavia)	R/FA

Head Coach: Chris Ford

Chief Scout: Fordy Anderson

Scouts: M.L. Carr, John Kuester, Donald Mead, Misho Ostarcevic, Rick Weltzman

Asst. Coach: Don Casey, Jon Jennings

Trainer: Ed Lacerte

* Injured Reserve

As of December 4, 1990

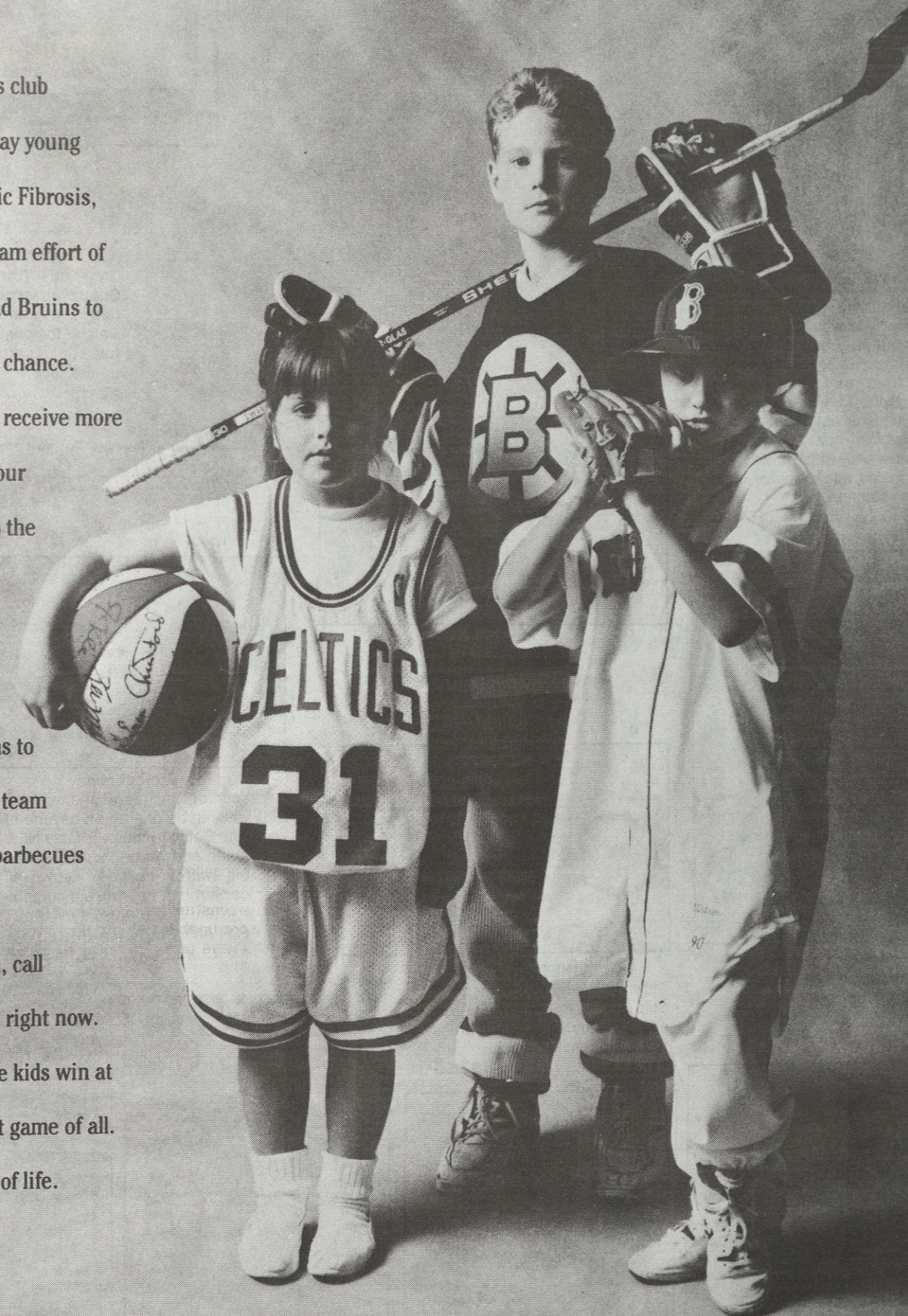
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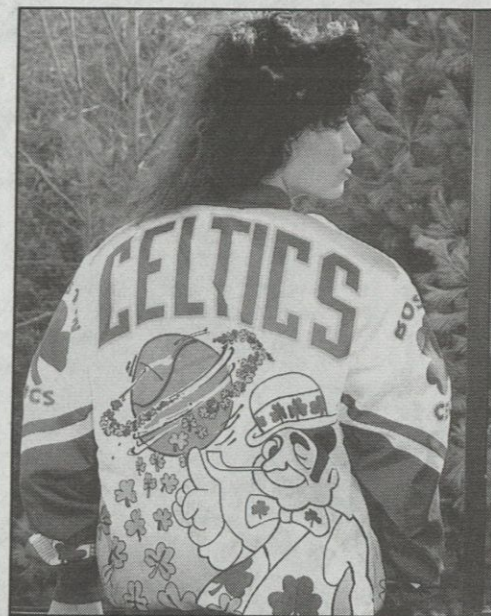


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THE LOCKER ROOM



NEW! Graphics Jacket

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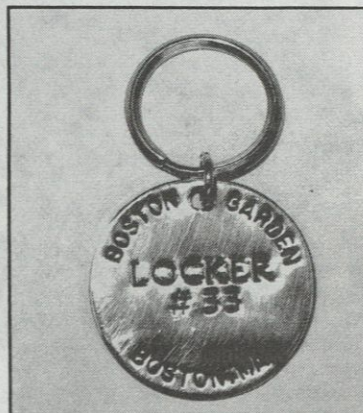
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"Net" T-Shirt

Heavy duty shirt with a new puff-print design on the net. Celtics is in green with a yellow outline.

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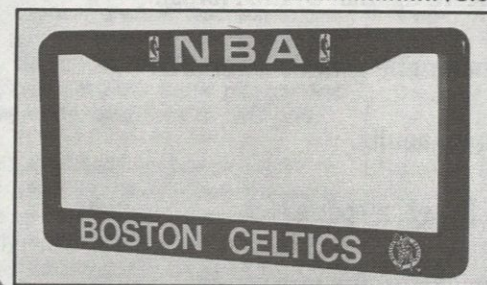
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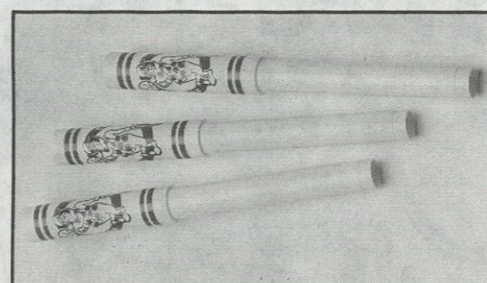
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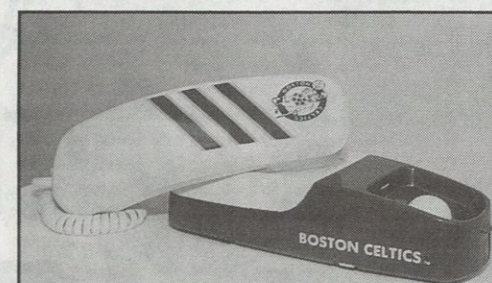
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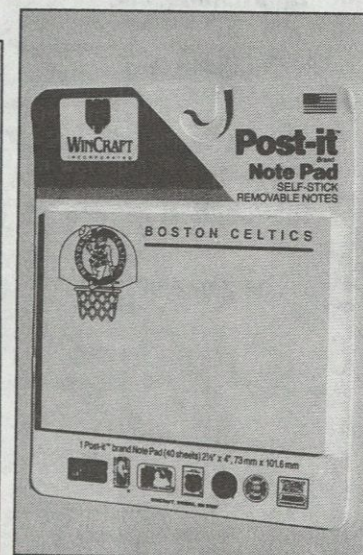
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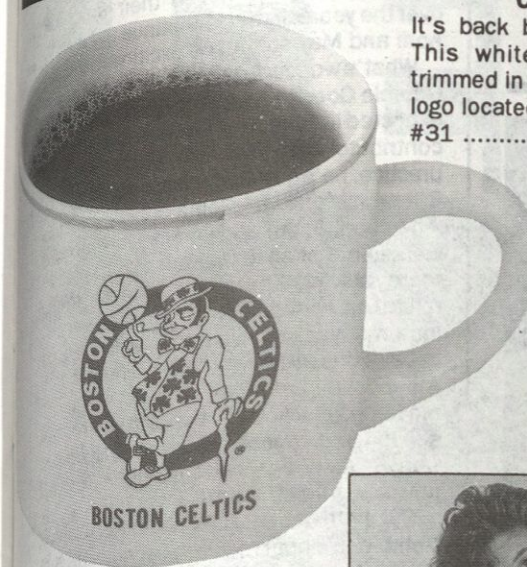
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Sweatshirt

Colorful Celtic green and white sweatshirt with Celtics in the center in green screen.

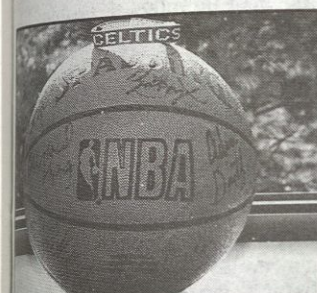
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Coffee Mug

It's back by popular demand. This white ceramic mug is trimmed in gold with the Celtics logo located in the center.

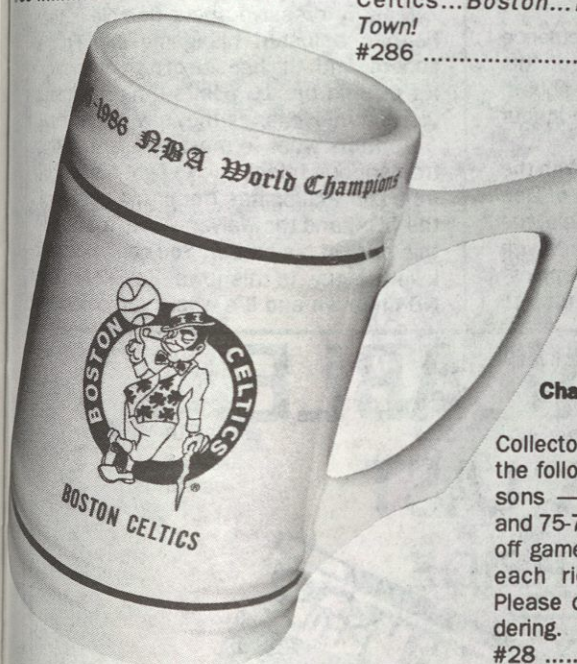
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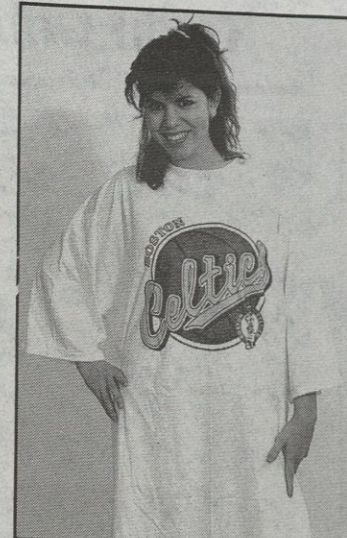
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NEW!! Player Jacket

The back of this jacket depicts Larry Bird in full color action shot. Celtics logo on front left chest with #33 under it and Larry's autograph above. 100% oxford polyester body with warm flannel lining inside, knit collar, cuffs and waistband.

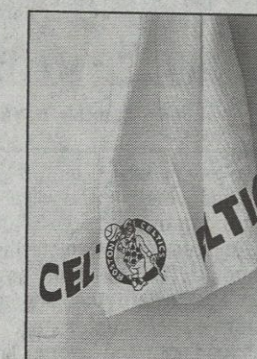
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Super fans will love this super-sized T-shirt. Jumbo graphics are screened on the front. One size fits all.

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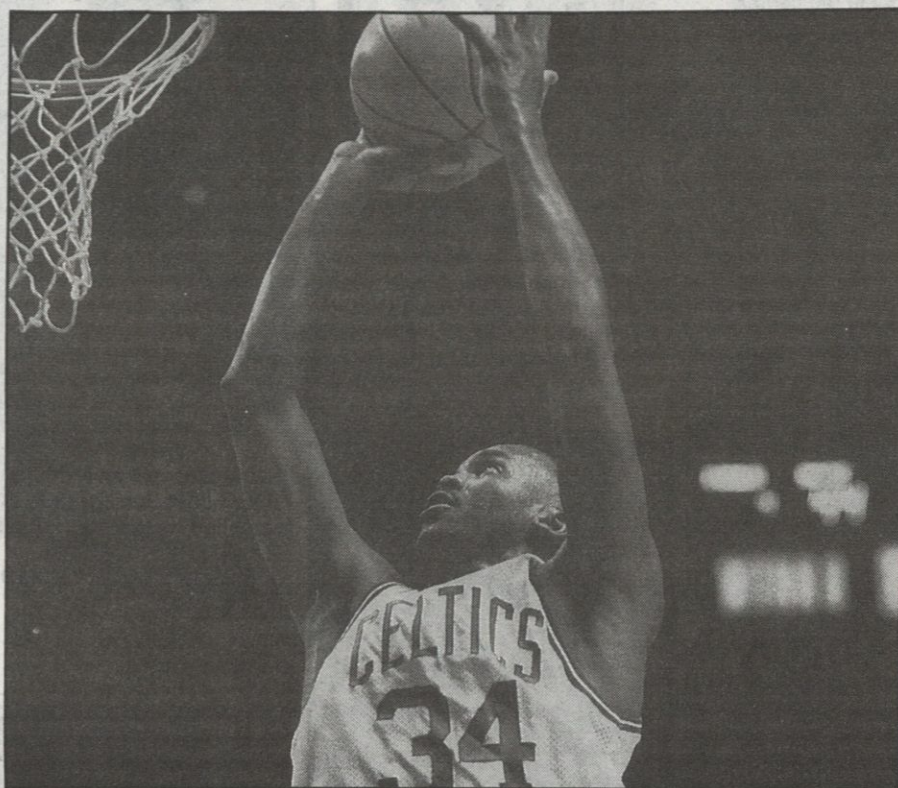
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By Glenn Rifkin

The Fan's Eyeview

Kevin Gamble Didn't Cave In



This season, Gamble the hero has reemerged.

One of the great things about sports is the emergence of an unlikely hero. Remember Max Magee in the first Super Bowl? Okay, so you can't remember that far. How about Mark "The Bird" Fildrych? Or how about Conner Henry on opening night for the Celtics a few years back? He pumped in about a half dozen three-pointers and instantly became a local hero.

You get the idea. There's a zillion of those kinds of stories in every sport, from hockey to hoop to hiking. It is Rocky in real life.

But what is almost always notable about the hero is that he or she gets that moment in the sun, in the spotlight and then quickly fades forever. They become a sports trivia question, a barroom conversation starter. It is, in fact, kind of bittersweet.

And then you have Kevin Gamble. Gamble did the instant hero gig two years ago. A desperate Jimmy Rodgers installed him as a starter with about ten games to go, and Kevin began lighting up the hoop for 22 ppg and was often unstoppable. He carried the Celts to a final playoff spot that year. The crowd went crazy and the theme song to "A Star is Born" began playing magically in the air.

Of course, last season began and the talk shifted. Is Gamble the real thing, everyone wondered? We'll soon find out. By mid-season the verdict seemed clear. Gamble was a one-shot wonder. He did his instant hero disappearing act, sliding further and deeper down Rodgers' bench, until he hardly played at all. In the walk-it-up purposeful offensive scheme, Gamble was a ballerina wearing army boots.

Fortunately, neither the Celtics nor Kevin gave up on Gamble. It was no surprise that Gamble didn't cave in. Those who know

him say he is a fighter, a guy with persistence, someone who will always come out on top in the end.

This season, Gamble the hero has reemerged. But this time, he is doing it with an eye toward the long run. He hasn't stormed onto center stage. He has quietly slipped into the chorus line and shown everyone that he can boogie. Big time.

All that Gamble has accomplished is: a) solved the Celtics' apparent small forward dilemma; b) added a beautiful offensive weapon to an already potent lineup; and c)

not uttered even a grumble while waiting for his chance to shine.

It seems to be an unlikely coincidence that the Celtics haven't lost (as of this writing) since Gamble joined the squad. They could be off to their best start in four years.

This team is very much for real. With the return of Brian Shaw, the addition of Dee Brown, and the emergence of Gamble, the Celtics are suddenly hitting opponents with a running, open offense and a trapping, muzzling defense. And it is paying off with

dividends. What is critical to remember — especially when the team hits an inevitable bad game or stretch — is that this unit hasn't even gelled yet. This is not the Pistons who have honed their machine over the years. If things continue to go well, April and May should be exciting months.

What's wonderful about this classic "Mr. Gamble Goes to Town" story is that no one expected it. Sure, Gamble was expected to contribute this year. He works hard in practice, he's obviously physically talented. But small forward? Come on!

Michael Smith and Ed Pinckney haven't worked out at all in that role. Smith needs more playing time, a chance to make mistakes without worrying about getting instantly yanked. Only then will his true capabilities be known. For now, he remains a minus and can only foul up a smooth machine. Pinckney is the picture you will see in the dictionary when you look up the word mystery. How can someone with such physical gifts be so mediocre?

But both these guys should be taking Gamble to dinner regularly because he has turned the focus of attention away from their failures on the court, and onto his success. And what a treat it has been.

Like did you ever realize what a superb passer Gamble is? Or that he is among the best finishers in the NBA? Or that he can nail a jumper as smoothly as a driving layup? In case you missed it, he and Larry Bird hooked up on a highlight film exchange of behind-the-back passes against Miami recently that drew everyone out of their seats. So what if it was traveling. It looked terrific.

Now Gamble won't get mistaken for Dennis Rodman on defense, but he is tough and holds his ground. His presence gives Chris Ford a lot of options on D that weren't available when the season started.

Most impressive about Gamble is that he has adjusted his game into Ford's scheme with the finesse of a great painter. He puts in his 16 points a night without disruption. He is, as they say, in the flow.

Perhaps what is most odd is that this tremendous talent had to fight his way up from the Philippines (for crying out loud), the CBA, and the waiver wire to make it to this spot in his career. You can't help but love the guy. Is this Iowa, Kevin? No, it's NBA heaven and it's where you belong.

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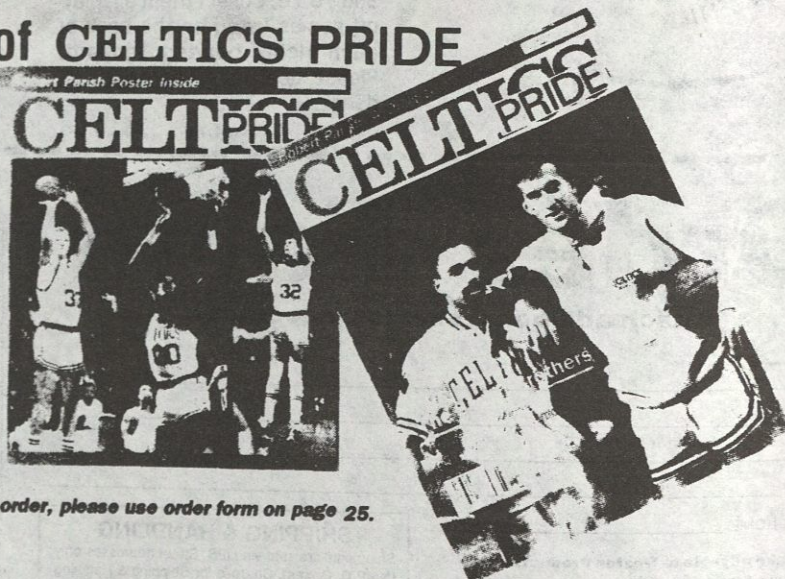
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